


Discover the magic behind the enchanting Hex symbols

The top corners of the cover feature decorative hexagonal symbols. The top-left symbol is a complex geometric design with red, yellow, and green triangles and a scalloped black border. The top-right symbol is a blue and red star-like hexagon with a red tulip-like shape and a green leaf-like shape. The main title is centered below these.

HEX AND SPELLWORK

The left side of the cover has a circular decorative symbol with a yellow and red geometric pattern. The bottom right features a large, stylized green plant with heart-shaped leaves and circular flowers, some containing geometric patterns, set against a yellow background.

THE MAGICAL PRACTICES OF THE
PENNSYLVANIA
DUTCH

KARL HERR

HEXENMEISTER

HEX AND
SPELLWORK

HEX AND SPELLWORK

THE MAGICAL PRACTICES
OF THE PENNSYLVANIA DUTCH

Karl Herr, Hexenmeister



WEISER BOOKS

Boston, MA/York Beach, ME

First published in 2002 by
Red Wheel/Weiser, LLC
York Beach, ME
With offices at:
368 Congress Street
Boston, MA 02210
www.redwheelweiser.com

Copyright © 2002 Karl Herr

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, or by any information storage and retrieval system, without permission in writing from Red Wheel/Weiser, LLC. Reviewers may quote brief passages.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Herr, Karl.

Hex and spellwork : the magical practices of the Pennsylvania Dutch /
Karl Herr.

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references.

ISBN 1-57863-182-3 (pbk.)

1. Magic--Pennsylvania. 2. Pennsylvania Dutch--Religion. 3.
Pennsylvania--Religious life and customs. 4. Folklore--Pennsylvania.
I. Title.

BF1622.U6 H47 2002

133'.4'09748--dc21

2002008481

Typeset in Times

Printed in Canada

TCP

09 08 07 06 05 04 03 02

8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

I dedicate this book to the beloved memory of my
father and my grandfather, who preceded me as
hexenmeisters and who patiently taught me my craft.

I also dedicate it to my beloved wife, Helen,
and to my children, Carl and Helen,
who are living in a world in which hexenmeisters
like myself seem to be going out of style.

CONTENTS

Introduction	ix
Chapter 1 The Tradition and the Work	1
Chapter 2 Health and Healing	17
Chapter 3 The Painted Magic of Hex Signs	41
Chapter 4 The Spoken Magic of Spellwork	59
Chapter 5 The Written Magic of the Himmelbrief	75
Chapter 6 The Magic of Natural Objects	107
Chapter 7 Superstition or Practical Reality?	125
Afterword	135
Suggestions for Further Reading	137

INTRODUCTION



In the Pennsylvania Dutch country, of which Lancaster and York are the most famous cities, there are a great many people who practice traditions that have not changed much since their ancestors, the Swiss Germans, emigrated from Bavaria in the 1700s. I am not talking about the old-order Amish or the strict Mennonite congregations, whose differences from modern society are easily seen. I mean the ordinary people who live in this part of Pennsylvania. Many of them live in a few other states as well, such as North Carolina, Indiana, and Ohio.

The majority of these people are farmers or craftspeople. They are not often found in big business. They are rarely very competitive or adventurous, most of them living within a few miles of where they were born. Modern times today may be overwhelming to some of them, but the majority stick to their simple

tasks and practice their sincere religious beliefs. Most of these good people have a great faith in God and in the promise of salvation made by Jesus Christ. They are a good and simple people, the kind often called the salt of the earth by others. They live a quiet life, keeping to themselves for the most part. Even the most modern of these honest people deserve the title of plain folk.

The ancestors of these people, who were always rather superstitious, brought with them a number of traditions that have lost neither their charm nor their effect over the years. The most important of these practices in the field of what people call magic is known as hex work, or hex and *Speilwerk* in the variety of blended German and English that is spoken among the older generation of these good people. Often it is referred to as Pow-Wow. In fact, it is one of the oldest European magical practices found in America.

This book is about Pow-Wow, curing, and other magical practices and similar traditional ways that many of the Pennsylvania Dutch people still use today. They are practices that most people in our fast-paced modern society hardly know exist. Yet in these practices there are echoes of magical arts that reach back to the earliest beginnings of human civilization. It is for this reason that I believe that they are valuable for more people to learn about. I believe that they are also worthwhile to practice, as they are calming and offer an opportunity for reflection for those who use them in this frantic modern world.

Although many people consider quaint much of what our ancestors believed in and performed, it remains to be seen whether those practices are actually quaint superstitions or practical realities. The people who grew up in the Pennsylvania Dutch country, and left it, have gained a very good background for themselves

from these quaint practices, enabling them to go on to success in many other fields of endeavor. As my grandmother said, we were "raised right." I hope that I can say this of my children, and that they will take their honestly earned Pennsylvania Dutch heritage with them wherever in this world they may go.

Karl Herr, Hexenmeister

Note to the reader: This book is intended as an informational guide only.

The approaches, techniques, remedies (or "tryings"), and hexes described herein are not meant as a substitute for professional medical or psychological advice. Neither the publisher nor the author offers any explicit or implicit representations that using the hexes in this book will bring about any particular result.

Karl Herr is the pseudonym of a well-known writer on subjects of magic and spells. His persona in this book is based on his own experience and on stories and knowledge gained from other Pennsylvania Dutch hexenmeisters. Therefore, this is not a work of fiction, but nor is it in the journalistic or scientific sense true.

CHAPTER 1

THE TRADITION AND THE WORK



I understand that among modern witches there is a great deal of consideration given as to just what a tradition consists of and to which one they belong. There is apparently a great deal of debate about which traditions are more authentic than others. There also seems to be a question as to who has the right to lay claim to a "real" witchcraft tradition.

Now, all of this came to my attention when a very slender young man and an equally slender young woman came up to speak to me as I was sitting on my front porch one Saturday afternoon several years ago. They began by asking me if I was the hexenmeister. I said that I was. I have a small sign on the gate to my

house that says so. This makes it easier for some first-time visitors to identify my house from that of others on my street. These young people then proceeded to ask me about my "tradition," and about how I came to be a hexenmeister.

As it happened, I had been thinking about these things myself, as my birthday was not all that many days off. I was comfortably reviewing the affairs of the past year in my mind as I was sitting and relaxing on my porch. In my own thoughts, my one great concern was whether or not the Lord God was pleased with what I had done over the past year. When this pair of youngsters interrupted me, I had not come to any real conclusions, but I had not found any grievous faults in any of my actions over the past year either.

The young couple asked me if I was a Gardnerian, which I told them I could not identify. Then they went on to ask me if I belonged to a coven. After I assured them that I did not belong to a coven of any kind, they proceeded to tell me what a Gardnerian was. They told me quite a lot about their own version, or as they said, their tradition, of witchcraft. They said enough to convince me that they were quite harmless.

I gathered that they basically worshiped our mother Earth. I told them that I supposed that was a good thing for them, but added that I was a Christian. I believe that it is a good thing to honor the Earth, as there are too many people today who seem to think they can harm the Earth forever without it ever taking any vengeance on them. I believe that if you cannot find it in your heart to worship the Lord God, you might as well worship his marvelous creation. The two of them sat with me on the porch for some time, talking to me about their ideas of witchcraft and the things that their version, or rather their tradition, of witches did.

I heard them out, and then I told them that I was a hexenmeister, which meant that I was a spell master. I pointed out that this is often interpreted to mean a witch master as well. I added to them that it was my task in life to remove spells and curses that an evil witch might put onto people. We spoke, and I later said that it was also my task to assist people in gaining what they legitimately desired in life. I told this interesting couple that through this work I exposed those who came to me for assistance to the glory of Almighty God and the many blessings that the Good Lord sends to all those who sincerely ask for them.

They were quite surprised to find that I was not only a believing and churchgoing Christian but was also very active in the various affairs of my church. They were even more surprised to find that the pastor of my church knew of my being a hexenmeister and even counted it well that he had me as an active member of his congregation. When I told them that my father had been a hexenmeister, and his father before him, they asked me about the hexerei tradition again. They were quite disappointed to find that being a hexenmeister did not often pass down in the family line.

My son is not a hexenmeister, and has no desire to become one. Instead he completed college and is working with computers, doing something that I do not understand at all. He gave me the computer I am using to write this book. It is much easier to type on than my old manual typewriter. My daughter studied anthropology in college and is now married to Jacob Post. I will say that Jacob could be a hexenmeister if he really put his mind to it because he, unlike my son, has the ability. Unfortunately, he does not have the calling, which comes from God, not from the desire of man.

I explained to the young couple that the whole idea of being a hexenmeister was rapidly falling out of favor. Every year it seems that there are fewer of us in the Pennsylvania Dutch country, or anywhere else that I know of. Then the boy said something that I eventually thought over and decided was very sensible. He said that I should write about the hex work so that other people would have some idea of it. He told me that if it was dying off, other people should get a grasp of how this work was actually done. The girl suggested that because my daughter was studying anthropology in college, she could help me in the writing of it.

I told them I would think prayerfully about their suggestion. Eventually, after praying about it and talking to my daughter at some length, I decided to write this book. It has taken me some years to get started, but with my daughter's help, I am finally on my way.

I gave the two of these young witches a glass of lemonade, and after a bit more interesting conversation, they left. I have not seen them again from that day to this. They gave me a lot to think about, however, and I thank them, and the Lord God, for their visit.

I had heard of these modern witches, who dance around a circle as naked as the day they were born. I had never expected to meet any of them in my life. I had not known that there were so many traditions of them, apparently being different denominations, just as the Amish, the Mennonites, the Lutherans, the Baptists, and the Presbyterians were all descended from the Catholics, and are all Christians. I thought to myself that there must be a similar set of witch denominations. Accordingly, there must also be some original witchcraft sect from which all of these many traditions were descended.

I resolved to write about my own tradition, such as it is; although it is just a tradition in the sense that there have always been hexenmeisters among the Pennsylvania Dutch. There is no initiation or other ritual by which one becomes a Hexenmeister that I know of. All you need is the burning desire to be of help to other people and the God-given talent to be able to do so. A hexenmeister is an instrument of the Lord God, assisting those people who come to him in their path of life. He tries for their illnesses and attempts to assist them to health and earthly prosperity. In bringing them aid, he also does a little of what usually passes for magic. It is my calling, and I do what I can with it. I suppose that it could be called my "tradition," but until I met those two young people, I had never thought of it in that way.

Now here I must tell a bit about a few of the truly evil witches I have known, for they were very unlike those two very pleasant young people whom I spoke with on my porch that late, summer afternoon.

The first, and the worst, was a woman who I truly believe was as evil as God is good. She lived in the same town that I live in, not very far from York, and she had a daughter about twenty years older than my own daughter. She herself was at least twenty years older than I, being much closer to my father's age.

My father, who is now deceased, first met this woman's work in a professional way when he and my grandfather were called upon to break a curse she had placed on a boy to whom she had taken a romantic inclination. The boy was a Mennonite, and he and she were still in school at our local high school. The girl was a year younger than the boy, but her youth did not stop her evil inclination. She had tried to bind the boy to her with an evil spell. I believe that she felt that his father was better off than he really

was. My father and grandfather broke the spell and identified the young spell caster. I was not born at the time and knew nothing of the affair other than what my father and grandfather told me about it much later on when I was learning from them.

This setback did not stop the woman from continuing to work evil, however. In the course of time both my father and grandfather had a great deal of her work to undo. There was probably also quite a bit of her evil work that was not called to their attention. This woman was remarkably successful with most of her work. She did this evil work consciously and deliberately, through casting black spells, knowing full well what she was doing. She was not just giving people the evil eye, harming them through her envy and jealousy, but both as a girl and later as an adult woman, she manipulated things to suit herself and used her magic to control all things around her as well as she could.

When she was through high school, she married a man and tied him to her as tight as she could. He did well, but he died young, leaving a big insurance policy to the witch when their daughter was still in grade school. There was a great deal of suspicion among the hexenmeisters in our town that she had murdered him with her foul magic. None of us would say so, however, and such a belief is not evidence in any court in the land. This lady lived her whole life in the ways of evil magic, but her daughter fortunately, through the great grace of God, turned against her mother's evil ways at an early age.

Another witch woman, who lived out in the country, was married to a simple farmer. She became evil when her first and only child died of the croup when it was three or four years old. It was said of her that because of her grief she sold her soul to Satan.

Some of this woman's neighbors said that she would even go into the back field of her house to couple with Satan on the night of the full moon. She was about ten years older than I, and I can remember one of my schoolmates inviting me to go out to her farm and see her couple with the devil on a night of the full moon. My father, hearing of this proposed expedition, forbade me to go, and so I did not. My schoolmate did not get to attend the event either, as his father, also hearing of it, kept him home as well. A few of the ne'er-do-well men in our town went out on one occasion to visit what they thought was to be a show of some kind. They came to no good end from doing so. Some of them told people in town that they had been quite horrified at what they had seen in their night's expedition.

This woman was famous for cursing other women to be sterile, and so she and her husband were soon left all alone. They were never invited to weddings or any other joyous affairs or celebrations. Living in the country, this can be a very lonely thing. In time, they completely left the church, although her husband used to go to church on Christmas and Easter. It was said that he had to overcome his wife's strong opposition to do so.

It seems to be the fate of men who are married to these evil witches to die early. The husband of this witch died early as well. He passed away in the field one summer day. A neighbor discovered him slumped over his tractor, the horn blaring away. By the time I started in the hexenmeister practice, he was long dead, and the witch woman lived alone on her untended and overgrown farmland.

It was said that a few people from town and even from the outside world used to visit her in her loneliness. Their visits were not social, however, as they came either to have their fortune told

or to have this evil witch cast spells on others. This woman apparently earned at least a scant living by doing evil, both for herself and others.

There are male witches as well as female, but in my experience, the women seem to be more numerous, while the few men I've met seem to be more powerful. In this work we call a man who is a sorcerer a *Zauberer*. This does not necessarily mean that he is evil, but usually it does mean that he is skating pretty close to the edge of being evil. These men summon spirits of the dead and do other things that no hexenmeister would ever consider doing.

One such man, Mr. Harkness, lived on the end of the city block on which I bought my house. He never bothered me, but he did have his own practice and his own style of working. I will say that his style was one that was far different from my own. My father told me that he was fundamentally a good man but that he had always desired power above all other things. He certainly got a great deal of power in his lifetime. He was known all through the Dutch country for performing almost miraculous feats.

Mr. Harkness made a great deal of money from selling magic cups to people. These are cups that are used in a particular way to grant the wishes of the person using them. While it is not unknown for a hexenmeister to make one, it is unusual. No hexenmeister would ever make them in quantity or offer to sell them to just anyone. Later on I will tell how they are made and used. In any event, he practiced his art in his own way. He was known to occasionally put curses on people for money as well as to take curses off people for money. He was known for doing hexing, or laying curses with magic, as well as praying for curses to be lifted.

He lived alone in his house after his wife died until he was in his middle or late eighties. Then one night, without being sick at all, he died suddenly. He was not particularly a churchgoing man, but I suppose that in his own way he feared the Lord God. After he died, his ghost was seen for quite some time around the house he had lived in. Then one day it was just gone.

I once wondered how he would report his work to the Lord when he stood before him for his judgment. I asked my late father about this once, and he told me that it was not our place to judge others in this way. I thought about it and decided that I would heed the words of scripture, "Judge not, lest you be judged" (Luke 6:37). For I do indeed fear the judgment of the Lord God.

There have been several other witches, both male and female, whom I have come across in my life, but these three were the most powerful of all of the witches I have known. The first caused great misery for her daughter, as well as for any others who crossed her path. The second rendered many fine women unable to bear a child and did evil work for others as well. The third did many strange things that are best hidden away in secret. At least he did not do them openly.

If any of these three had associates in their evil, I did not know of it. It was rumored that Mr. Harkness had been the master of a coven of witches in his younger days. But that was well before I was born, and I was never told of it by anyone whom I considered to be really reliable. My father, who knew him well, often referred to him as "old Amos." When I moved onto the same city block that Mr. Harkness lived on, my father would sometimes refer to him as my neighbor, always with a sly smile.

HOW I CAME TO BECOME A HEXENMEISTER

Now, how it came about that I became a hexenmeister was in this way. My grandfather was born in 1902, the fourth living son to his father, who had fought in the war against Spain. My great-grandfather had a small pension from his army service because he had been wounded in the Philippine Islands. He also had a small shop in town, where he made simple furniture as well as caskets. He sold these goods mostly to the plain folk, the old-order Amish, and the strict Mennonites. These good people were more plentiful than they are now.

My grandfather was lying in his crib in the shop one day when Miss Ann, who was well known as a hexenmeister, came into the shop. She was also known as a devotee of the Lord, and was respected by all who knew her, including the Amish. She prophesied over the crib that my grandfather would be a great hexenmeister. Then she said that she would be pleased to teach him all that she knew. My great-grandfather, knowing what store the plain folk held for this kind of child, told her that he agreed to this. He then asked her when he should send my grandfather to her. Without missing a beat, Miss Ann said that she would take him into her own home when he was ten years old.

And so when my grandfather was ten years old he was sent to stay with Miss Ann. He lived with her in her house, studying with her and doing domestic chores for her, until he was almost twenty. All this time she taught him all of the work of a hexenmeister and all of the secrets of the art that she knew. She also taught him to pray and to fear the Lord God far more than he had before he went to live with her.

Miss Ann then arranged quietly for my grandfather to marry the daughter of Elias Gerry. Mary Gerry was only sixteen at the time. Now, when he lived with Miss Ann, he would come home every Sunday morning to go to the Lutheran church with his family. Miss Ann was a strict Mennonite, but never tried to change his church affiliation. My father told me that the first time my grandfather came home with Mary Gerry, whom my great grandfather knew from our church, the family thought it was a great scandal. They were afraid that he might have seduced her.

When my grandfather announced that day that he was to marry her, speaking to the family who were ready to go to church, it was a real surprise, almost a shock, to them. The surprise soon turned into a celebration, and the Gerry family came over to my great-grandfather's house after church and joined into it. My grandfather left the home of Miss Ann that week and moved back into the family home with my great-grandfather. A week later he married Mary Gerry, and they lived together in good health as husband and wife for fifty-three years, dying within a week of each other.

My grandfather went to work at a mill the following week; on the side he practiced as a hexenmeister. Most of the people who do the hex work do it as a sideline rather than trying to earn a living at it. It is really no way to make money to support a family. My father was born ten and a half months after they were married. He was the first of six children, three boys and three girls. After my father was born, in 1921, my grandfather got a job with the electrical company, and kept it until he retired in 1967. While he was working, he continued to practice as a hexenmeister on Saturdays and Sundays and at night.

When my father was ten my grandfather brought him to Miss Ann, who by now was a very old lady. My father stayed with her for eight or nine years and learned what she had to teach him. He left her home when she died. Then he joined my father in his hex work, as well as working for the telephone company in an office in town. I was born two years after he married my mother, Anne Hertner.

Between my father and my grandfather I grew up learning the hex work. When I broke my leg while I was in high school, I spent most of my free time that summer reading in the public library. I would discuss all of the interesting things I read with other people I met at the library.

I learned a great deal from the people with whom I discussed these many different things, as well as from my reading. After I cast my crutches aside and was about back to normal, I still continued to talk to the more educated people I came across, as well as to some of the tourists I met in town. I got a job in the tourist information booth downtown the following summer just so I could learn more about the world and talk to people who came from other places, some quite far away.

My father and grandfather encouraged me go to the junior college, and I got a job with the electrical company as well. Then I met my future wife, Helen Kramer, at the tourist booth in town the week before I was to leave the job to attend the junior college.

It was love at first sight. We took one look at each other and decided that we wanted to marry. But it was two years before we did anything about it. We both knew that marriage was right for us, however, and we even discussed it the first day we met.

After I was out of the junior college and employed full time at the electrical company, we married. I began my hexenmeister

practice on weekends and evenings, just as my father and grandfather had done before me. I am still working at the electrical company, still quite happily married to Helen, and I am still practicing as a hexenmeister on evenings and weekends.

I have inherited all of my father's and grandfather's living clients by now, as they have both passed on to their rest in the Lord. At the same time, because of the general decline in the number of hexenmeisters, I have any number of people coming to me from time to time, even from out of town, and occasionally from as far away as Lancaster and even Philadelphia. You must know that a real hexenmeister works on his reputation and does not ever advertise. Even placing the small sign on my gate gave me some pause. It was only after prayerful thought, in which I decided that the sign would be of more benefit to those who came looking for me than it would be to advertise myself, that I decided to put it up there.

THE GERMAN ORIGINS OF WHAT A HEXENMEISTER DOES

So this gives you some idea of just what it is that a hexenmeister does and how it is that he or she learns to do it. As I have said, hexenmeisters are increasingly rare today. None of them are witches, at least as far as I know. But all hexenmeisters live to counter the evil spells that truly evil witches put on people.

Of course, not everyone who is thought to be an evil witch really is one. The nice young couple that visited with me were hardly evil. They were only sincere nature worshipers. I know that during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in Europe many hundreds of people were tortured and burned for being witches. This craze against witches was so strong and so affected every

superstition. The Bible is a great influence on all hex work. The justification for magical work is Christ's words in the Gospel of Mark (11:22-26), which insist that all people of good heart and a pure soul can perform miracles. As a result, the prayers of the hexenmeister are usually made in the name of Jesus Christ. For Jesus Christ is the foundation of the hex work, or of the hexeri tradition, should you wish to call it that.

CHAPTER 2

HEALTH AND HEALING



One of the most frequent things that a hexenmeister does is to try for the healing of someone who is ill. They are frequently consulted for this purpose by members of the old-order Amish and the stricter Mennonite sects. Hexenmeisters are often consulted by other people as well, but the success of their healing work with the plain people is what they are usually best known for in their own community.

One of the primary reasons that hexenmeisters are favored by the Amish and the other plain sects is that it is never necessary for people to disrobe when the hexenmeister tries to cure them of what ails them. Most of the plain people, that is, those of the more unworldly religious sects, are extremely modest. The vast majority of these modest people never even completely disrobe in front

of their own mates. They are often afraid to go to regular medical doctors, as that would require them to expose their bodies to a stranger, something that they simply cannot do. I must say that modesty concerning the physical body is one of the traits of the Pennsylvania Dutch culture. While most of the people do not carry it as far as the plain people do, we Dutch are all a relatively modest people, especially considering the world and the times in which we now live.

THE VISIT TO A HEXENMEISTER

When a client visits a hexenmeister it is often at least a semisocial occasion. They usually sit in the hexenmeister's living room together and have a cup of tea or coffee, or a glass of lemonade or at least water. Beginning with a general social conversation, the client gradually introduces the physical problem, the condition, or whatever other difficulty of which they have concern. The hexenmeister never diagnoses the problem the client may have. If there is to be a diagnosis of any kind, it must come from the mouth of the client. Especially whenever any kind of illness or other physical condition is involved, the hexenmeister just listens to the complaint of the client, usually without any comment.

When the client has told his story, the hexenmeister then decides if he will try for the illness or not. In almost all cases, hexenmasters will try for an illness, whether or not they really understand any of the medical aspects of the client's condition.

The trying for any condition is almost always accomplished by the use of a spoken charm or prayer. More rarely, a written charm or prayer may be added to the spoken prayer. In no case will hexenmasters ever suggest herbal remedies, teas, or drugs of

any kind to their clients. Nor will any hexenmeister ever massage, manipulate, or do any kind of bodywork on a client. He never even touches the physical body of the client, with the possible exception of removing poison ivy, which is mentioned later on. All that he is allowed to do is to try, through a prayer, for the healing of the person's condition.

When a hexenmeister says that he will try for an illness, that is exactly what he means. Only God heals, and the hexenmeister only tries for the cure of an illness. He is never able to promise a cure or even an improvement in the condition. The trying that the hexenmeister does places his work for the client in the hands of God. In this way, the Lord God's better judgment is always recognized to prevail in the case. Both the client and the hexenmeister usually understand this process. If the client is new to working with a hexenmeister, he may have to have the details of this healing practice fully explained to him. Giving this complete explanation of trying for the illness to any new client is always the responsibility of the hexenmeister.

POW-WOWS AND HEX WORK

Hex work, especially hex healing, is often known as Pow-Wow among the Pennsylvania Dutch. It is supposedly called that because it is a matter of the hexenmeister "talking" to the disease, usually with a traditional spoken charm, to make the illness leave the client.

Just as with a visit to a physician, sometimes the hexenmeister's trying for a cure will work, and the client will be healed. Sometimes the trying will not have much, or even any, effect at all. Most of the time this work of trying for an illness is done

according to a set of fixed "rules of practice" that the hexenmeister has learned from those who taught him his art. Sometimes the hexenmeister will be inspired to say or do something, when trying for an illness, that is entirely new to him. The hex work is a difficult thing to learn entirely from reading books, although a few hexenmeisters seem to have done so.

BOOKS ABOUT HEX WORK

The most popular book on the subject of hex work is John George Hohman's *Pow-Wows, or the Long Lost Friend*. This book was first published in Berks County, Pennsylvania, in 1819, and it has been in print ever since. The fact that it has been kept in print all these years is certainly a testament to its popularity.

There are several other books that are also reputed by many hexenmeisters to have almost magical properties. The best-known examples of the hex books that are used by most of the hexenmeisters of the Pennsylvania Dutch country are mentioned here. There is a fairly complete list in the Suggestions for Further Reading at the back of this book, with more interesting information on the origin of some of these magical books.

Probably the next most popular book after Hohman's is *Egyptian Secrets, or White and Black Magic for Man and Beast*, which is said to have been written by Albertus Magnus (1193-1280), the scholastic philosopher who was well known in his time both as a theologian and a magician. The several books that bear his name were almost certainly written by someone else. The most likely thought is that *Egyptian Secrets, or White and Black Magic for Man and Beast* was written in Germany during the eighteenth century, by which time Albertus Magnus was long

dead. *The Sixth and Seventh Books of Moses, or Moses's Magical Spirit Art*, which was certainly not written by Moses, is another well-known book full of similar magical spells and charms. There is also an *Eighth, Ninth, and Tenth Book of Moses*, but it is generally less respected by hexenmeisters than the *Sixth and Seventh*.

All of these books contain similar material in that they have spells both verbal and practical for relief of different conditions of humankind. With the possible exception of the last, the *Eighth, Ninth, and Tenth Book of Moses*, all are almost certainly from the pens of writers in the many small German states of the seventeenth and eighteenth century. We may also say without much fear of being contradicted that most of these books were probably written in the southern German province of Bavaria, or at least nearby.

There are a large number of other books, most of which are sold in cheap paperback editions in so-called occult and spiritual stores, that deal with the kind of work hexenmeisters do, as well as with popular candle magic, which is actually a different thing altogether. Many of these books also deal with many other hidden things. I understand that many of the ancient magical *grimoires* have returned to print recently, and so have a number of other old magical books of dubious reputation. Most of them have not much at all to do with the hex work, but they are all interesting to read, for those who are interested in this work.

You could actually say that there are any number of books that hexenmeisters use. I suppose that you could also say that everyone has his or her own favorites. However, the most valuable book of all is the one that the hexenmeister makes up from his own experiences. This is a book that contains the charms and spells he learned from those who instructed him in his art. It also

contains those additional charms and spells he has learned from other hexenmeisters, usually over a long period of time. It is upon this book of experience that the hexenmeister must place his greatest reliance when he works with his clients. He may well have many other books on his shelves, and he probably has all of the better-known books I have mentioned above. However the book of his instruction and of his own experiences in life is always found to be the best book for the practicing hexenmeister to follow.

There have been several other books written about hex work, Pow-Wows, and hexenmeisters. Most of these books have not been very flattering to the art or to those who practice it. About seventy years ago, in 1928, there was a murder, supposedly caused by a *Braucher*—a traditional herbal folk healer—who was said to have been working against another person in York County. The person who believed that he was being worked against was found guilty of killing the *Braucher*. Arthur H. Lewis wrote a book about this case, called *Hex*. This tragic story was also made into a motion picture, called *Apprentice to Murder*.

This "hex murder" in York County stirred up a great deal of agitation against hexenmeisters, and even against the practice of hex healing itself, at the time. There is still a great deal of prejudice against the hex and Pow-Wow work and hexenmeisters themselves in some quarters. This is particularly true of the strong feelings held by some Baptist and other more fundamentalist Christians. They sincerely, but incorrectly, believe that all hex work comes from Satan. I can only say to this that when Jesus Christ was accused of chasing out devils through the use of Satan's power he made his famous statement that "a house divided against itself may not

stand" (Matt 12:24-28). This is the best evidence that I know of that good does not ever proceed from evil.

At one time the state of Pennsylvania used to license hexenmeisters. They did this to be certain that they had at least a grade school education. They also gave the aspiring hexenmeister a written test on the subject, although what it could consist of I do not know. Licensing of hexenmeisters is no longer done by the state. I understand that the certificates that the licentiates received from the state at that time are considered to be real antiques, even collectors items, in some quarters today.

The best of the books about hexenmeisters is probably Lee R. Gandee's book called *Strange Experience*. It tells the story of his life as a hexenmeister and the various experiences that he had, both as a child and later as a man. Like almost all hexenmeisters, Mr. Gandee held a full-time job and did all of his hex work on the side.

TRYING FOR AN ILLNESS

The way that a hexenmeister tries for an illness, at least in my particular case, is as follows. The hexenmeister faces north, while the person he is trying for is standing in front of him and looking at him, thus facing south. The hexenmeister always wears his hat when he is working for someone, just as those men of the Jewish religion do when they pray, as he is calling on the Lord God. Now the hexenmeister pronounces the spell or the words of the charm, and then he usually makes the sign of the cross (an equal-limbed cross) three times to the person he is trying for. Now there is usually a pause of several minutes or even as long as a half an hour. Then the same process is repeated, and there is another pause for

about the same length of time. Finally, the entire process is repeated a third time. The work of trying for the illness is then finished. With this trying, the hexenmeister has placed the person solely in God's hands for the remission, or the cure, of their problem.

VERBAL CHARMS FOR HEALING

Many of the charms used by hexenmeisters seem to have no sense or reason to them. They are not examples of good poetry or good literature. These verbal charms work quite well, however, in the proper hands. It is their frequent success in curing that brings those who are doing the hex work their clients. Because many people seem to think that these verbal charms are really magical spells, I will give a few of them below. In my opinion, they are actually folk prayers for the remission of an illness or condition.

The following charm is used for those who are lazy or who have become lethargic, as well as for those who constantly oversleep. It is a good spell to use for teenagers, as well as for older women who are going through the change of life.

*By Mary's milk and Christ's blood
Banished be all evil.
Arouse thy nature, gain thy force,
Restore thy health and vigor.
Now let thy life begin anew
Secure in faith of redemption.
Amen.*

This next charm is used for the removal of evil and for the protection of people from further evil influences that may be directed

at them, regardless of the source. It is also used to remove the evil eye from people and to protect them from its recurrence.

*I stand with Christ, who commanded evil spirits out of
pigs, causing them to be dashed against the rocks
below.
As Christ commanded Satan, so do I, calling upon
Jesus' name.
In the name of Jesus Christ, who came to save us from
Eve's sin,
Do I release thee of all foulness
That has encompassed this child of God's glory.
In the name of the four apostles,
Do I surround you with angels who shall protect you.
Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John stand by you.
Go forth now free of all evil,
And be sure of your salvation through Jesus' blood.
Amen. Amen. Amen.*

To give you an idea of the charms and spells found in the more popular books of the hexenmeisters, I have reproduced a few of them below. This assortment should give you enough of a feel for these spoken spells that you will be able to write out your own charms or spells to use whenever one is required.

This spell is from John G. Hohman's book, *Pow-Wows, or the Long Lost Friend*. This is one of the famous charms used to stop the flow of blood from a cut or wound. It is one that is often used to test those who wish to become hexenmeisters. If the would-be hexenmeister cannot stop the flow of blood, he is not often taken on to be trained by the experienced hexenmeister. This charm, like most of them, is repeated three times. The blood usually stops by

at least the middle of the second repetition, but the third repetition should always be made over the wound anyway.

*Jesus Christ, dearest blood!
That stoppeth the pain and stoppeth the blood.
In this help you (say the first name of the bleeding
person),
God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Ghost,
Amen.*

The confidence of the magicians of the Middle Ages being unbounded, the following spell was written into *The Book of Secrets of Albertus Magnus*. This is a spell that is supposed to stop the spread of a fire. The only man whom I have ever even heard of successfully using this spell was a long-deceased hexenmeister who lived near Blue Bell, Pennsylvania. It was said that he put out a fire in his home with this spell in the early 1920s. I thank God that I have never had occasion to use it. I must admit that I would probably also use a fire extinguisher as I spoke the words of this spell.

*Our dear Sarah journeyed throughout the land,
Having a fiery hot brand in her hand.
The fiery brand heats; the fiery brand sweats.
Fiery brand, stop your heat,
Fiery Brand, stop your sweat.*

I might point out that the above spell is used to break fevers in both children and adults. I have used it with good results for this much less dramatic purpose.

For the removal of the pain from someone who has any kind of a burning pain in his insides, the following charm is deemed to be quite effective.

*Jesus Christ in glory came,
Take away the burning pain,
Born of the virgin without Eve's stain.
Take away the burning pain,
As he called the fishermen,
Away from their occupation,
And gave them glory without end,
Take away the burning pain.
As he died upon the bitter tree,
For saving the soul of you and me
Let their come a gentle rain, and
Take away the burning pain.
Amen.*

The spells above should give you the flavor of the kind of spells and charms that the hexenmeister uses when trying for a physical condition. Many hexenmeisters write their own spells after praying over the particular case. Of course, only a few of them ever tell their clients that they do this. Some of the more worldly hexenmeisters have been known to read their new spell from a tea-stained paper, making the client feel that the spell is quite old. People who will not have anything but the latest household appliances and other modern products in their house are for some reason deeply impressed by supposedly old and arcane spells. Some of the more worldly hexenmeisters will go out of their way to provide these so-called ancient spells for their better-paying clients.

MONEY AND PAYMENT

The hexenmeister should not ever charge a fee for his work in trying for the healing of someone. Trying for a healing must always

be done without charge, unless the healing can be guaranteed. As the healing can never be honestly guaranteed by the hexenmeister, who leaves it to God's will, it must not ever be charged for. Many hexenmeisters have a box placed in their workroom for contributions. Most of their clients willingly contribute to the hexenmeister for their work, each giving according to their means. In some cases hexenmeisters will gratefully receive gifts of food or produce from their clients. Often these gifts of food come after the client has recovered from the illness. These gifts of food are as welcome as cash contributions, as the hexenmeister and his family do have to eat. And yes, hexenmeisters pay taxes on their income. Giving to Caesar what is his, I have filed my Schedule C self-employment income tax return with the IRS for a great many years.

Magical work for a client is another thing entirely. A hexenmeister will usually discuss the work that the client wants to be done in some detail, speaking privately with the client, just as he does with a person who comes to him asking that he try for a healing. Then the hexenmeister usually will privately consider and pray over the work to be done. If he believes that the work is within his grasp and is something that is permitted to him to accomplish, he will usually quote the client a price for the work. Once the price has been quoted, however, it is not to be paid until the client is satisfied that the work has been completed to his satisfaction and the desired results have been obtained.

Himmelbriefs, which are magical charms, and similar work are usually charged for at a fairly fixed rate. In 1997, the going price for a handwritten *himmelbrief* for a purpose other than healing was usually between thirty and fifty dollars. For a mimeographed, printed, or Xeroxed *himmelbrief*, the price is a great deal less. These sheets usually cost only between fifty cents and a dollar each. This is about the same price that these same printed

himmelbriefs sell for in the many tourist and curio shops in the larger cities of the Pennsylvania Dutch country. Some hexenmeisters are so reticent to charge for their work that they only accept contributions for even this work, although writing out a *himmelbrief*, or making a charm, can be quite a tedious project.

A hex sign, colorful designs that are often found on barns, can cost from about fifty dollars to over three or four hundred dollars. Most hexenmeisters are not very interested in painting hex signs, and they usually give this work over to someone who makes it their business. Some of these hex sign painters are hexenmeisters, but most of them are not. The best of them are very good artists at this work, however, as it takes more than a little artistic talent to paint an attractive hex sign. Those who paint hex signs as a business usually do pretty well on their artistic ability alone.

FOLK REMEDIES

As I have previously mentioned, a hexenmeister may not recommend, prescribe, or even suggest any physical remedy of any kind. I must say here that I do not use any of the remedies I give below in my work. However, the remedies that I mention below are all traditional remedies, and I have had occasion to use some of them with my family. The results I have obtained or have observed among my friends who also use them are given below along with the remedies.

Let me also say right off that these remedies are all traditional folk remedies, and they are not to be taken as a substitute for using modern medicine for a physical condition. I know that there is something of a return to using many of these old-time folk remedies today. Please bear in mind that when these remedies were used by most people, there was a much higher death rate

than there is today. I believe that if these remedies were all that good, they would still be used by modern physicians today. I am telling you about these remedies as a matter of information, rather than suggesting that you actually use them to attempt to cure any condition or heal any illness that you may have. When I find that I or anyone in my house is sick, I pray about it first, then I try for it, and if that fails, I then consult a physician.

CHICKWEED HERB

I had never thought of this as anything other than a kind of poor man's lettuce until it was pointed out to me that it is quite good at keeping illness from the door. Fresh, it is a tasty addition to a salad. Dried and powdered, it is useful as a preventive of colds and flus. I take about a teaspoon full of the powdered herb each day when I cannot get it fresh from the garden.

CORN SILK TEA

This tea has been used as a specific for urinary complaints for hundreds of years. Supposedly it was discovered by the American Indians and used by them for that purpose. Make up a pot of the tea in the morning, using about a quarter cup of corn silk to about a quart of water. The afflicted person should drink at least three cups of the tea during the day, drinking more if possible. Drinking this tea will do nothing at all for men who have a prostate condition.

EGGPLANT

The common eggplant also has some interesting healing properties. They are not very well known today, but I have found that reducing high blood pressure is the most useful of them.

Cube an eggplant into about $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch cubes, leaving the skin on. Place the cubes in a quart mason jar and fill the jar with water. Keep the jar in a cool place, such as a springhouse or a refrigerator, for a week and then drink two ounces of the water each day until the water is all gone. You can add two ounces of water the first three or four days without any ill effect, but the solution will become too diluted after that. As with Four Thieves Vinegar (see Garlic below), it helps to have one bottle cooling while you are taking what you drink from the other bottle.

GARLIC

Garlic is one of those plants that is well known as a European folk remedy. I have often heard it said that those who eat a lot of garlic are never ill. My son told me once that it is because no one will get close enough to them to give them an illness. Garlic is a natural antiseptic and is thought by many people to be a potent medicine for blood purification. Garlic has many uses in natural folk healing. There have even been several interesting books written about the healing properties of garlic.

The Spanish people even have a prayer to "Saint Garlic," or Saint Ajo. A Puerto Rican man gave me a translation of this prayer, which I am giving here as a curiosity more than as a recommended prayer. On the other hand, I believe that it would probably be a good idea to pray the prayer over a garlic clove that is to be used in healing.

Miraculous and blessed garlic, you who were put into the Mount of Calvary where Jesus died, you have been chosen to give eternal light and freedom to those who use you. Let me be freed from evil. Let me be freed from the

influence of demons. Protect me from my enemies. Let evil not see me, nor let it reach me. Let no harm come to me. Amen

Miraculous garlic of all good and beneficial properties, eliminate all envy from my life. Separate me from my enemies. Aid me in my work and business affairs. Assist me in gaining the love of those around me, and in loving them in return. Amen.

This same man told me that many of the Hispanic people keep a garlic plant in their home so that they can have the beneficial influences of the garlic plant around them. I myself do not do so, but I have always had garlic plants in my garden. I know that their presence discourages some of the garden pests. From growing it in the garden I have even begun to use it in my food, something that most of the Pennsylvania Dutch do not do. Some of the more common folk remedies using garlic are given below.

Reducing fevers: Crush two or three cloves of fresh garlic and rub them on the soles of the person's feet. It is said to bring down a high fever, and I have found this to be so.

For blood purification: Eat two or three fresh garlic cloves every day. Garlic oil pills of various manufacturers are available for this, should you wish to try them. Some of them are even said to be odorless.

For a sty in the eye: Cut the tip off a clove of garlic and touch it to the sty. I have found in my own experience that this will burn a bit at first. However, doing this once did rid me of quite a bad sty within a day or so.

For a healing liquor that is said to protect against all disease: Take a quart bottle of red wine vinegar and place in it a dozen or more split garlic cloves. Peel the cloves and split them lengthwise. Keep the bottle cool for a week and then drink about two ounces every day from the bottle. You can make up two bottles, using one when ready and letting the other one cool while you make up the next batch.

The above mixture is known as Four Thieves Vinegar. It was supposedly used by four thieves who were assigned to bury the dead in France during the years of the plague in the fifteenth century, and it was said to have been used later to keep people from catching the plague. I believe that it is an effective spring tonic, but I would not risk catching the plague by relying on using it alone.

HONEY

Honey is one of nature's most powerful and most healthy foods. It is the only food that will not spoil. A few of the various traditional uses of honey for health and healing are given below.

Honey-water mixtures are used to help small children gain weight (use a tablespoon of honey to a cup of water). This mixture is also used to encourage the old to eat. For everyone, a glass of water with a teaspoon of honey stirred into it, taken first thing in the morning, will assist in regulating the bowels, losing weight, and in generally making the day go better. I do believe that it is the best daily tonic that a person may take. I have been told by a man from Syria that it was recommended by the prophet Mohammed to his people. In my case, my own father recommended it to me when I was very young. Everyone in my own family has taken it every day since Helen and I married.

Honey is also useful in healing. It is a principal treatment for burns, as well as being a food and an antiseptic. Apply a bit of honey to the burn and allow it to stand, renewing the light coating of honey as it wears off. You may lightly bandage the area with gauze to hold the honey in place if this is necessary. Many serious burns have been healed free of scars by using honey in this way.

For many years I have made up a cough syrup of honey and lemon juice, which I use whenever any sore throats come into the house. I call it the One Two Three syrup, as it was named by my daughter when she was quite young. It is made of one tablespoon of hot water, two tablespoons of lemon juice, and three tablespoons of honey. Mix the solution well, stirring it until it is completely blended. Then take a tablespoon of this mixture immediately, another in a half hour, the third an hour later, and the fourth an hour after that. Whatever remains may be taken an hour after the last dose. Usually by the fourth dose the sore throat will have passed away.

Honey may also be used to increase the effectiveness of an herbal poultice. Make up a decoction of the herb, about a handful of herb to a cup of water. Add two or three tablespoons of honey to the mixture, stirring it in well. Now soak a poultice cloth in the mixture and apply the warm—or better, hot—mixture to the person. Allow it to sit on the person until it cools to body heat or even much longer for the best results.

LETTUCE

An old-time cure for stomach ulcers is to boil a head of lettuce in an iron pot until it is quite soft. The afflicted person then eats all of the lettuce and drinks all of the juice. This is said to almost

instantly cure a stomach ulcer if it is done as soon as the ulcer is discovered. I have, fortunately, never had to be concerned about this.

MARIGOLD TEA

This is said to be a specific against cancer, but I would go to a physician immediately should I suspect that I had this dread disease. I do know that it is a good tea for any person who is recuperating, regardless of the illness from which they are recuperating. It does assist the person in healing in some way. A tablespoon of the flowers to a cup of boiling water is the correct mixture. Drink three or four cups a day. The marigold flower poultice is also good to use in treating "proud flesh." This is a condition of a poorly healing wound known as a keloid in modern medical parlance (see Poultices below).

ONION

The ordinary garden onion has some merit as a healing remedy. It has been used in some societies for healing, particularly in the American Indian and South American cultures. Those onions that make your eyes tear have the advantage of clearing the eyes of dirt and dust accumulations. A person with dust in his eyes should chop up an onion, breathing the fumes and letting the tears flow as they may. It has worked in my home for this purpose many times.

For colds with a watery nose and mucus, take a slice of onion, about half an inch thick, and place it in a pint glass of boiling hot water. Let this sit until the water is cool, and then drink the water in three or four doses, of about an ounce or two each, during the

day. This will work well for those colds that involve a very runny nose and produce a lot of mucus in the system.

The ordinary garden onion is also used to stimulate the growth of hair. For this purpose, half an onion is rubbed with vigor into the entire area of the head. Rub the onion into the person's head until it begins to break down from the effect of the friction. I have found it to be of no avail at all if the person is bald.

Eating onions raw is said to be good for the system. Some people cannot eat cooked onions, something I have found interesting, as these same people rarely have any trouble when eating raw onions.

POULTICES

Poultices have been used in healing for centuries. The basic idea behind all poultices is to apply them warm and leave them on, preferably for several hours, so that the healing can have some beneficial effect. Ordinary poultices and honey poultices are no different; they all take some time to have any real healing effect.

If the poultice is to be placed on an area of the body where it is difficult to keep positioned, it may be covered with a towel. In some cases a piece of sheeting may be used to tie the poultice in place. Leaving a poultice on overnight is also not unheard of. In this case it should be applied to the person at least as warm as body heat, if not quite a little bit warmer. Obviously it will cool down to body heat or less, but the warm application of the poultice will assist the ingredients in penetrating the damaged part of the body.

There are a variety of poultices that may be used for different conditions. The following list only gives some suggestions of the more common poultices that are used in folk medicine.

- Arnica Montana poultices are useful for pulled muscles, bruises, and sore or strained soft tissue. This herb is also useful in a hot bath for the same problems. Make a strong tea of a handful of the herb in a quart of water and add it to a tub of hot water. Soak in the tub until the water reaches body heat. My son used this bath with some good results when he played on the sports teams in high school.
- Bilberry poultices may be applied warm over the eyes. They are supposed to be quite beneficial. I have personally found that any very warm cloth placed over the eyes relieves eye-strain very well indeed.
- Calandula, marigold flowers, are supposed to be useful for treating fresh hernias or ruptures. This poultice must be applied every day for several weeks, beginning as soon as the rupture is noticed. The same poultice is also useful after fresh skin has formed over a cut or a burned area, where it is said to prevent scarring. It does seem to help prevent proud flesh, but it takes several applications, made at least twice a day, over a period of several days to a week or two.
- Chaste berry poultices placed on and above the pubic area are supposed to be good for women's complaints, menstrual cramping, and so forth.
- Comfrey poultices may be used for all strains, pains, and sore backs. It is also said to be useful for healing cracked ribs.
- Damiana poultices when applied to the mid-upper back of women who have upper back pains of various kinds can often be of assistance in relieving them. They are said to be especially good for pregnant women.

- Saint-Johns-wort poultices have a good effect on the nerves and the damage done to the hands and feet when they are caught, pinched, or otherwise injured or harmed. The fresh herb itself is often mashed and bound to the injured hand for this effect. If this is to be done, place the hand around a tennis ball over which a paste of the herb (which I make in an electric blender) has been smeared. Then apply more of the herb paste to the hand and bandage it well in place. Never splint or poultice a hand in the straight position, as the hand naturally has a curve to it. This worked very well when my son hurt one of his fingers during a baseball game.
- Sheep tallow mixed with elder bark scrapings is said to cure the deep red skin inflammation known medically as Erysipelas. The tallow itself is good for all inflammations of the skin when it is gently rubbed on. Applying it to the person in a massage is said to relieve many complaints of the skin.

SPRING TONICS

Many children have not so fond memories of spring tonics, which are often made from honey and apple cider vinegar. There are a variety of herbal ingredients that are often added to this base, as well as the yellow powdered Flowers of Sulfur. This tonic is definitely not recommended for use by anyone today.

Honey and apple cider vinegar by itself is said to add the beneficial qualities of potassium to the system. So does eating either bananas or oranges. Taking more potassium into the system may assist in relieving the painful charley horse leg cramps that

children and some adults occasionally get in the night. I prefer eating the fruit to drinking the mixture myself.

TOBACCO

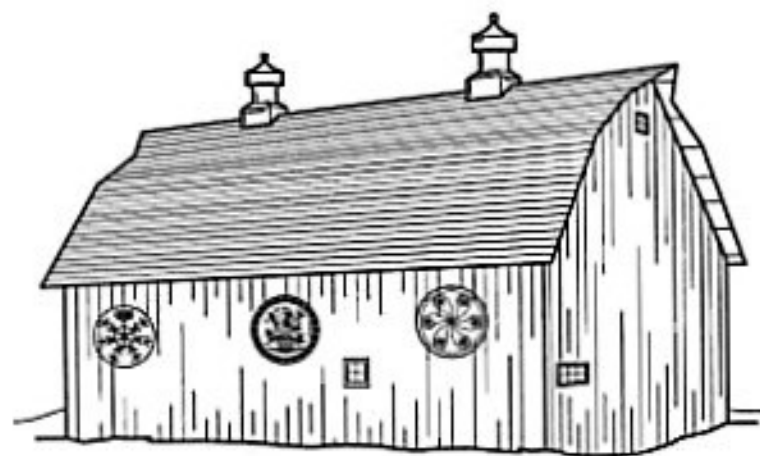
I neither smoke nor chew the weed, but I will say that a hand of dried tobacco is wonderful for keeping cockroaches away from the kitchen or the pantry. Crumble up the tobacco, and put about a tablespoon or more in the kitchen drawers and cabinets. The roaches seem not to like the stuff, so they avoid it, and any places where it is sprinkled. Soaking a hand of tobacco in a bucket of water makes a good insect spray for the garden, but it washes off in the rain. I do not believe that either of these uses is a good testament for people using the weed, but that is just my own opinion.

CHAPTER 3

THE PAINTED MAGIC OF HEX SIGNS



One of the most interesting things about traveling through the Pennsylvania Dutch country is the large number of attractive hex signs that grace the houses and barns in the area. While they are never found on the barns of the plain people, those of strict observance, such as the old-order Amish and the strict Mennonite, these colorful signs are often found on the barns of those considered by the plain people to be worldly—Lutherans, Baptists, and Presbyterians. The Reading and Berks County Visitors Bureau even has outlined a motor tour of an area in these counties in which these colorful hex signs are displayed on existing barns.



These hex signs are of two kinds. Some of them, like those of the famous hex sign painters Jacob Zook and Johnny Ott, have been painted for a magical purpose. Others are taken from popularized illustrations, like the illustrations made by Jacob Zook and Johnny Ott in their book, *Hexology*. Still others are merely decorative imitations, often mass-produced on hardboard and sold inexpensively in the many curio and tourist shops in the Lancaster area.

There are any number of curio shops on Route 30, located between the suburban outskirts of Philadelphia and Lancaster. There are also some tourist and curio shops in the city of Lancaster itself. These shops cater to those tourists who visit our area believing that the Pennsylvania Dutch way of life is quaint or charming.

Indeed it may seem to be quaint to those modern people who see it from a distance. However, it is also a healthy lifestyle and one that brings a quiet mental and spiritual joy as well as an inner

prosperity to those in the area who live it. In addition, this quiet, rural, and personally productive lifestyle is one that deals successfully with both the physical and nonphysical worlds.

Today there are numerous academic studies that state that these colorful hex signs are not unique to the Pennsylvania Dutch community. Some further state that hex signs were not painted on barns until the middle years of the 1800s. While this may well be true, in the past 150 years these Pennsylvania Dutch hex signs have gained a reputation around the world, both for their beauty and their effectiveness. Pennsylvania Dutch hex signs, particularly those painted by the Zook family, are sold today in more than three thousand stores all over the world. This is a solid testimony to the fact that, ancient or not, many people believe in the use of these signs, and in their effectiveness.

One of the ways that this belief is gained and transferred around the world is through the protection and aid that hex signs afford to those who use them. They are actually painted spells. Their symbolism, even when they are made by a mass-production method, is still useful and beneficial to those who display them and respect them. There are some really interesting success stories of people who have purchased these inexpensive hardboard painted hex signs at curio stores. Many of the purchasers have found that even these mass-produced painted hex signs have had a good and positive influence in their lives. This is what keeps the hex sign as one of the best-known symbols of the Pennsylvania Dutch.

One of the best stories I have ever heard about these mass-produced hex signs was told to me by a woman who worked in one of the curio shops that sold hex signs, among any number of other things, to the tourist trade. She told me that a young couple

entered the shop, apparently in the midst of an argument. They walked around the shop, looking at the goods and still quietly arguing with each other. As my informant told me later, they were spreading disharmony about themselves with a pitchfork.

When they brought up a few trinkets to her to pay for, she gave them a small hex sign designed for marital harmony. The woman looked at it and said that she thought that they probably needed a larger one. The clerk found them a larger sign of the identical design, and the couple purchased it.

About a year later the woman came back to the store. She told the store clerk that she believed that placing the hex sign over her fireplace in her home had improved their marriage. She told the clerk that she and her husband had argued constantly before they had put the hex sign up, but now they almost never argued. She also said that they were now much more loving and caring with each other as a couple. The woman then thanked the clerk for suggesting the sign to her and gave her five dollars as a tip.

SOME BASIC PATTERNS FOR HEX SIGNS

There are some basic patterns for hex signs that you may use to make up whatever kind of hex sign may be required in any specific case. Please bear in mind that the word *hex* means "spell," and when you paint these signs, you must concentrate your mind on the person for whom you are painting it as well as on the effect that you desire the sign to have in that person's life.

The best way to do this is to hold an image in your mind of the person achieving what you desire for him or her as you begin to paint the sign. Then paint the sign slowly, continuing to hold that image firmly in your mind. If you paint these signs with a

concentrated will, you may be assured that they will have considerably more effect in the person's life than an ordinary purchased hex sign.

THE ROSETTE

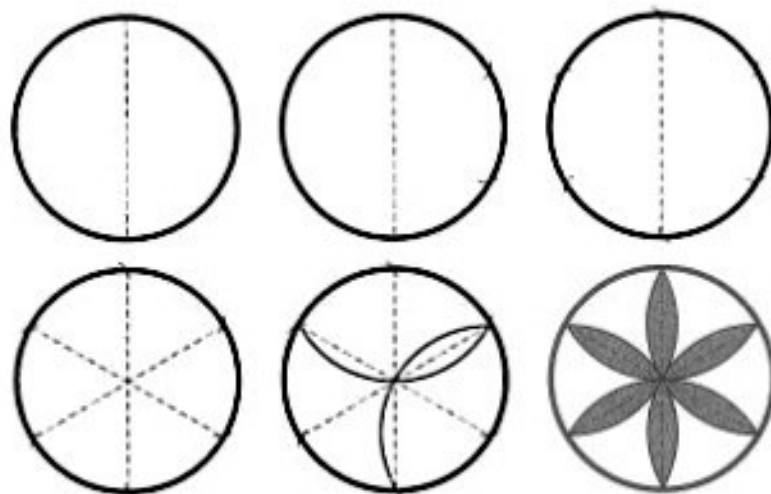
The oldest and most widely known hex sign is the six-pointed star, known as a rosette. It is said to have the property of chasing bad luck from the place it is displayed. Thus it is used to bring good luck to a home, a farm, or a business.

This sign may be made with a string for a compass, a pencil, and a straightedge, or with a compass and straightedge, depending upon how large a sign you wish to make. It is made by first marking the center of the circle, and drawing the circle to the diameter you wish it to be. Next, measure the diameter of the circle by drawing a line across the circle, passing through the center (see diagram on page 46). The top of the line should be at the place you want the upright point of the rosette to be. Use a straightedge to draw this line. For very large signs, a 1" x 2" piece of lumber may be used to draw the longer lines.

Now take the compass again and set it to measure the length of the circle's radius (from the center to the outside). Starting with the compass tip on the upper point, make a mark on the circle. Then move the compass tip to that new mark and repeat. Continue this until you return to your starting point. You will find that marking the radius around the circle will lay out six points. Now, using the straightedge, draw a line from each of these points to the center of the circle. You may use the compass to lay out the curves of the rosette by placing the tip of the compass on each of the outside points and drawing a curved line through the center of the circle to the points on either side of your starting point.

Next, you should erase your working lines, and then you are ready to paint the rosette. If you want to paint scallops or any other design around the edge of the circle, you should mark these in next. Once your circle is painted in the colors you desire, you may seal it by covering it with shellac or with a clear varnish. When the final coat of varnish is dry, the rosette is finished.

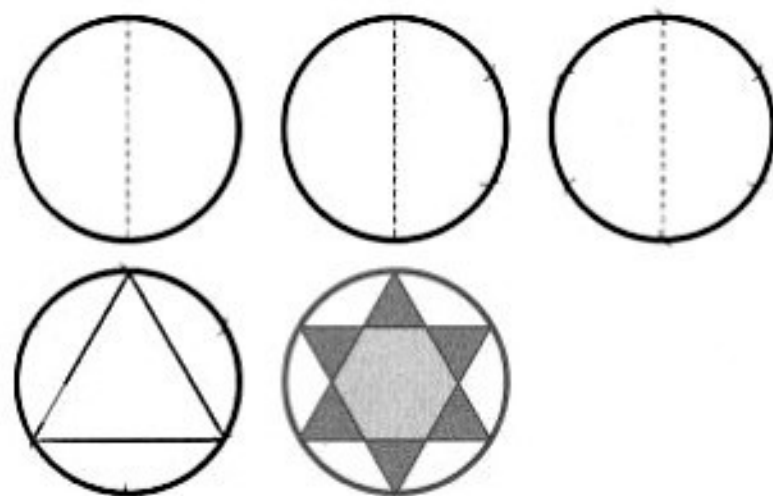
If you are painting a sign that is to go outside, you should be sure to use exterior oil paint. Place the colored oil paint over two coats of a good oil-based primer. Naturally the primer coats must be painted in the circle first. The primer coats must be allowed to dry thoroughly before you can begin to lay out the rosette. Once the rosette is laid out, you can paint the finished design as you desire.



The Rosette

THE STAR OF DAVID

The Star of David is laid out in the same manner as the six-point rosette except that the lines connecting the six points are run across the circle in the form of two triangles (see diagram below). One triangle points down toward the earth, asking for stability, while the other points upward to heaven, asking for divine blessings. This is the sign of the Jewish religion, which was the religion of Jesus Christ. The sign itself is thought to have a certain holiness about it, especially by Jewish people.



The Star of David

THE TWELVE-POINTED ROSETTE

By bisecting, or dividing in half, a line drawn between every two adjacent points of the rosette, you would be able to lay out another

rosette (see diagram below). This sign is called a double rosette, and is often used when there are two or four colors desired in the rosettes. The double rosette is a sign of the calendar, and relates to time, the year, and thus to eternity. Another way to do this is to bisect the radius of the circle. For a circle being laid out with a string compass, all you have to do is fold the string in half. You can use that distance to lay out the twelve points of the rosette around the circle.



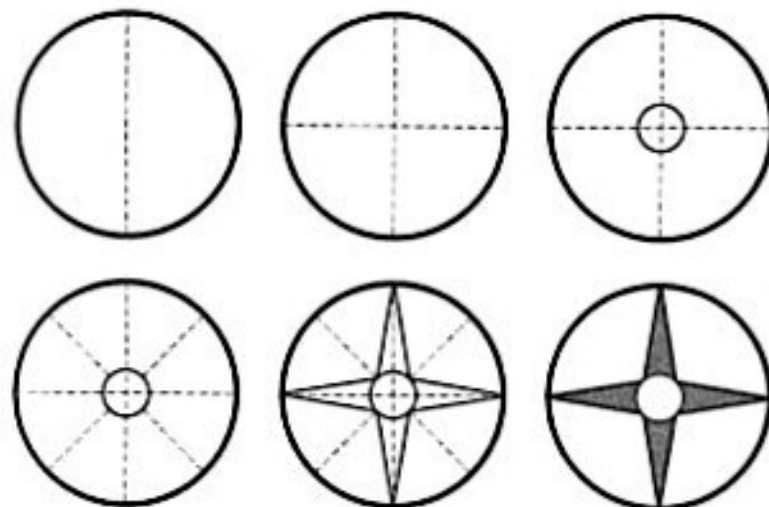
The Twelve-Pointed Rosette

THE FOUR-POINTED WHEEL OF THE SUN

The four-pointed wheel of the sun symbolizes not only warmth but also fertility. It is considered to be a good sign to have overlooking the fields of a farm, where it is used to encourage crop growth.

Draw a circle and, using a straightedge, lay out the top and bottom point by passing a line through the center of the circle (see diagram on page 49). Now draw a line at a right angle to the first line and passing through the center of the circle. Next, draw another circle in the center of the first circle, using about a third or a little less of the diameter. Then draw lines from the larger circle to the outside (circumference) of the smaller circle, bisecting the four points on the larger circle. Using these lines as a guide,

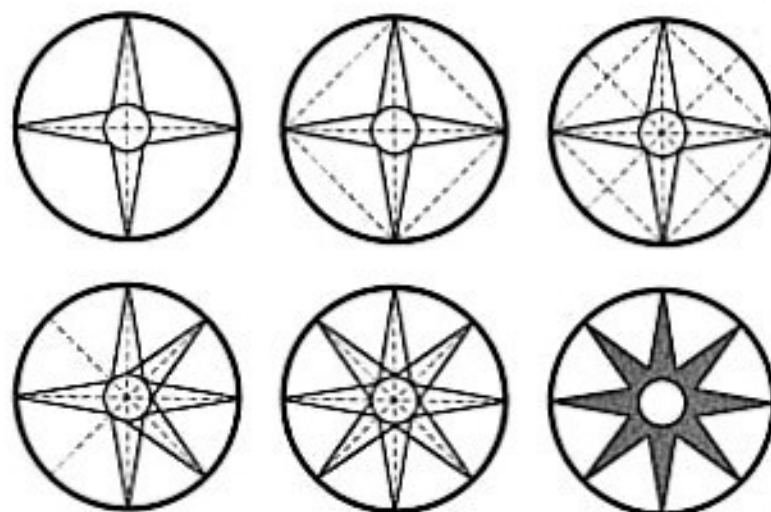
draw in the four points of the star. You now have a four-pointed star with a sun in the middle. The sun should be painted a golden yellow in this sign. This symbol is often used as a sign of prosperity and good luck.



The Four-Pointed Wheel of the Sun

THE EIGHT-POINTED STAR

Make a four-pointed star and then draw lines from each point to the one next to it (see diagram on page 50). This gives you a box within the circle. Now bisect these lines and draw a line from the bisecting points to the edge of the inner circle. Using these lines as guides, draw in four "new" points on the star. You now have an eight-pointed star. This is a symbol of luck, and good fortune as well.



The Eight-Pointed Star

THE EIGHT-POINTED SUN RAY

This is made as above, except that the center circle has a diameter that is about the same as the radius of the larger circle. The eight points are usually made in a lozenge shape, placed between the wheels, or they may be painted as two straight lines on either point of the guide line, rather than as rays from the outer circle to the inner circle. This is also a sign of success. The name of the person who is to be successful may be written in the middle of this inner circle.

This sign may also be made on a piece of good paper and carried with the person when he or she is faced with a difficult task or is beginning a new job. I have made up a few of these the size of cards, designed to be carried in the wallet of the person they were made for. They seem to work, as I have had no complaints concerning them.

THE SIXTEEN-POINTED ROSETTE

This is made in the same way as the eight-pointed rosette, with the lines between the eight points being bisected again. The lines across the circle are usually drawn with arcs on both sides, forming the rosettes.

EXPERIMENTING WITH DESIGNS

There are many other interesting designs that may be laid out in this manner, using only a compass and a straightedge. I suggest that you experiment with drawing some of them. It is with these simple tools that the ancient Greek mathematician Euclid devised his entire system of the science of geometry. I have also been given to understand that it was with only a string compass and a straightedge that all of the wonderful sculpture of the cathedrals of Europe were laid out by the master masons of the Middle Ages.

Given any number of points on a circle, you should experiment to see how you can lay out a design in the center of the circle. I have spent many pleasant hours doing this and have learned a great deal from my experiments with this interesting art. Some of the designs you will make in this way will immediately suggest to you what they may be used for in your work, while others are more than a bit obscure. With the application of some patient effort you will learn the meaning of a great many of these symbols.

PAINTING THE HEX SIGNS

Once the construction lines are in place, it is just a matter of painting the desired colors within the construction lines. This is done in the same careful way that a child would paint or color within the lines of a coloring book. It is advisable that you select the

colors in advance and try them on a scrap piece of the same paper you are using for your hex sign. In this way you can see just how the paper takes the watercolor.

MEANINGS OF THE COLORS

Just as the designs and shapes of the signs have a meaning, so do the colors that are used to paint the signs. Hex signs are usually painted in bright (but not neon) colors. Those hex signs that are to be used outside are often painted with a glossy enamel. The traditional meanings of the colors most frequently used in hex signs are given below.

Red

The planet Mars is called the red planet, and so red symbolizes all things male or martial, thus the active emotions, especially emotions of passion and lust. It is the color of love, especially sexual love. Activity and creativity are shown by the color red as well. It is the color of the male energy and of masculinity.

Brown

Brown symbolizes the earth, the building of a foundation, and the strength of the soil. Brown in a hex sign may be used to reduce anxiety and even to control the spiritual forces by grounding a person in the strength of the earth.

Orange

In ancient times orange was said to be the color of the planet Jupiter. Thus it symbolizes abundance and prosperity. Relating to safety in the passage through life, prophetic dreams, and peace of mind, the color orange is also used for hex signs made for gaining advancement in position and for gaining benefits of all kinds.

Yellow

The color of the Sun, yellow symbolizes health, both of the body and of the mind. Yellow deals with happiness and cheerfulness. It is used on hex signs that are made to reduce people's fears and apprehension. Yellow also represents happiness in love and the joyous love, affection, or friendship of others.

Green

The color of the fertile grass-covered earth, it symbolizes growth, fertility, and success. Thus green is used to symbolize luck, wealth, and luxury. It may also symbolize the gradual manifestation of things, such as the growth of ideas or the growth of thoughts that may manifest over time into physical reality. It is no accident that the American dollar bill is called a greenback. I believe that the color of the bills is one reason for the worldwide acceptance that I have been told our national currency has.

Blue

The calmest color, blue deals with protection of both self and others. It is used in hex signs that are made to restore health to someone who is ill. Blue is also used on hex signs made to help people overcome their fears. Blue also symbolizes peace and may be used to open a person's thoughts to a higher plane of being. Often the outer rim of a circular hex sign is painted blue to symbolize peace. As it is the color of heaven, blue, along with white, is often used as the background color for hex signs dealing with either protection or with spiritual matters.

Violet

Violet or purple is usually considered to be a sacred color and is used in hex signs to symbolize those things that are considered to be holy. Thus it is the color of the resurrection and the color of

Jesus Christ in his glory. It is used on hex signs made to assist a person in overcoming obstacles as well as on signs made for protecting a person or a place from harm. A rosette of purple on a sky blue background is a useful hex sign for this protective purpose.

White

Always a symbol of purity, it is often used as the color of the Moon. White symbolizes the power of the Moon, the feminine force, and thus womanhood. The crescent moon is usually painted white in hex signs. It is a symbol of spiritual strength and righteousness and is used as the background color on most of the hex signs you will find painted in the Dutch country.

Black

Black is used for the protection of the person or the property. The color black is a connection between all of the other colors. Thin black lines often are used to separate the various colors painted on a hex sign.

ARTISTIC SHAPES USED IN HEX SIGNS

There are a number of artistic shapes that are used in painting hex signs. Most of them are shown in Zook's book, which I have previously mentioned. I give the meaning of some of the more common of these many artistic shapes below.

THE DISTELFINK

This is a picture of a bird, sometimes drawn looking back at its tail. A popular symbol, it is thought to bring good luck and happiness wherever it is displayed. In



some cases, two distelfinks are used, indicating double the good luck and happiness. If the distelfinks have their necks crossed over each other, it is a symbol of great friendship or even of marriage. In the case of a marriage sign, the names of the two lovers may be written on the hex sign. In the case of two lovers who marry, the names are often written in a heart somewhere on the hex sign.

THE DOVE

This is a picture of a dove, or occasionally of a "bird of paradise." The bird of paradise in this case is a stylized dove whose appearance depends greatly on the artist. The meaning of the dove is usually peace and friendship. Often the dove is used as a sign of purity, or it may be used when asking for happiness in general. The dove may sometimes be used as a hex sign in meeting places where the desire is to encourage a general feeling of sociability among those who meet there.



THE EAGLE

Like our national bird, the bald eagle, this eagle is a symbol of strength and courage. It is also used to symbolize strength of vision, as in forethought. I have never heard of it being used as a hex charm to strengthen the eyesight, although that use was once suggested to me.

THE HEART

As you might suspect, the heart symbolizes a lasting love. It is often used on hex signs that are painted for engagements or marriages.

THE RAINDROP

A symbol for abundance in both rain and sun, when the raindrop is painted in the corners of the four- or eight-pointed sun wheel, it may be used to encourage rainfall. It is also a sign of pure water. Often it is used on hex signs to pray for crop abundance.

THE OAK LEAF

The oak leaf is a symbol of strength and endurance. It is often used in making a hex sign as a symbol for long life as well as to encourage stability.



THE ACORN

When painted on a hex sign, acorns may be used to symbolize children or even the number of children desired by a couple. It also is used to show that great things may come from small beginnings.

WHEAT

A sheaf of wheat or a single head of wheat is used to symbolize both abundance and goodwill. It is a fertility sign as well, and it is frequently used in hex signs to encourage both crops and children.

SCALLOPS

Scallops symbolize the waves of the ocean. When painted in blue, the scallop is said to encourage "smooth sailing" in life.

STARS

A symbol of heaven, the star is also used as a protection against the disaster of fire in the home or the barn. It is a sign of the hope for heaven as well as a symbol of general good fortune.

ROSETTES

As I have mentioned, the rosette is always a sign of good luck. It is the oldest and the most common of the hex symbols. Many hex charms can be made of the simple six-pointed rosette by painting the sign in various colors for the effects desired.



SUN WHEEL

The sun wheel of four points around a central circle is often used as a symbol of both warmth and fertility. With raindrops between the four points, the sun wheel is used as a sign of pleasant weather, moderating both sun and rain.

TULIPS

A sign of chastity, tulips also indicate the virtues of faith, hope, and trust. A hex sign using a purple tulip is often used to encourage chastity in young girls.



CHAPTER 4

THE SPOKEN MAGIC OF SPELLWORK



LEARNING TO TRY FOR ILLNESS WITH THE SPOKEN WORD

To attain the ability to use the spoken spells that the hexenmeister uses when he tries for an illness you must first develop a few good habits. You must learn good speech habits, be strong in your faith, pray and fast regularly, and refrain from having ill will toward others.

GOOD SPEECH HABITS

In John 1:1, it is said that:

*In the beginning was the Word,
and the Word was with God,
and the Word was God.*

In this way we are assured that just as God's words created the world and all that is in it, as the first three verses of Genesis state, our own words also will have a creative power of their own. As the creatures of the Lord God, our own words have a power that has been given to us by our Creator.

But if we are to cultivate this power, we must learn to be taciturn in our speech. If we do not speak with prior consideration of what we say, if we do not use our words frugally, we shall not be able to develop within our words the full power that they must have. If we wish to be able to reach out into the divine creation and try for healing, we must mind our words. If we wish to be able to cast spells with our words, we must realize that every word we speak is a potential spell and that we must treat each of these words accordingly.

Just as the Lord God made manifest all things on this Earth through his word, so it is possible for those who have accepted the power that the Lord God has granted humankind—his favored of all creation, as the eighth psalm clearly shows—also to be able to manifest their works in this world through the use of words alone. The secret to using words in this way is in first learning to use words sparsely, correctly, and always in a proper context. In addition, spoken words, like spells of any kind, must always be used in accordance with the manifested will of the Creator. We should never say anything that is in opposition to God's glory, and our

words must always be spoken with both honesty and sincerity. Then we may speak with authority, and as we see at the end of the seventh chapter of Matthew, the words we speak will have power.

FAITH

Jesus Christ said that if you have the faith of a grain of mustard seed (Matt. 17:20), like the mustard seed, your faith will grow. In time it will give shelter to the birds of the air and the beasts of the field. For the mustard seed is tiny, but the full-grown mustard bush may cover many things. Frequently the mustard bush shelters the nests of birds, and often many small animals make their homes within it. So it is with faith, growing from a small grain to encompass many things. The strong faith you develop within yourself may eventually become great enough so that you may shelter within your own faith those who come to you asking for your aid.

If you once plant the seed of faith within yourself, you must cultivate it carefully, knowing that by doing so all good things will come to you. This cultivation of faith is always accomplished through the acts of prayer and fasting (Matt. 17:21) as well as by keeping the fire of your faith always alive and burning in your heart. By allowing the seed of faith to take root and to grow strong within you, all of the good things of this Earth are eventually made possible to you.

PRAYER

Another thing you must learn to do is pray. You must always pray both inwardly and continually. My father always told me I should learn to make my whole life a prayer. I have attempted to do so,

although I often feel that I have fallen short of this greatly desired goal from time to time. However, I do consciously try to always tend the fire of my faith by continual inward prayer to the Lord God, who made me and sustains me.

The Bible teaches us not to pray in public but to "enter into thy closet" and to "pray to thy Father in secret" (Matt. 6:5-6). I believe that the darkest closet in which anyone may pray is the deep closet of the mind. I pray in that dark closet of my mind constantly, thanking my Maker and my Redeemer for the very life that he has so generously given to me.

An honest and sincere hexenmeister also should be praying constantly during all of his waking hours that the Lord God let his grace descend on him and allow him to be of greater assistance to those who may come to him. It is through this prayer that he gains and holds the ability to help others. He also should be praying prayers of gratitude, both for the help that the Lord God is constantly giving him and for the blessings of his circumstances in life. There is no other successful approach possible for gaining the ability to be of help to others than sincere prayer. Let your every breath be a prayer of thanks to the Lord God, who made you and who sustains you, both in your daily life and in your assigned tasks on this Earth.

FASTING

In my case, the act of fasting is done in the manner that my father and grandfather taught me. I suppose that they learned this method from Miss Ann, but I do not know. I have certainly never heard of this method of fasting from any other source. This simple method requires that I eat only as much food at every meal as

makes the size of my fist. I also drink a full glass of plain water with and between each meal that I take.

In the morning, on awakening, I drink a glass of water with a teaspoon of honey in it. About an hour later I have prepared myself for the day and am dressed for whatever I am expecting of that day in terms of work or weather. I then eat my breakfast, which is never larger than the size of my fist. On a working day I then go to work, and when the time for the coffee break comes I have only a full glass of water. At lunch I again eat only a small meal, usually one sandwich with another glass of water. In the afternoon, I drink another full glass of water. When I return home from work I do the same. Then at suppertime I again eat as much food as my fist is large, again taking my food with a full glass of water. I believe that this is as good a method of fasting as any. I have followed it since my father taught it to me in the year I entered high school. As a result of eating in this way, I am never over full, and I am never hungry.

Now, the Pennsylvania Dutch people all love their food, as I do myself. Most of us are quite large in the belly as a result of overeating. I have gained in girth over the years myself, but I have never changed my diet. I attribute my size to the good effects of the love my wife and I have for each other, as it certainly is not from overeating. I do not go without a meal except for some useful purpose, nor does anyone in my family ever go hungry.

My wife prays over our food and the groceries coming into the house. We give thanks to the Lord for the sustenance he provides us, praying this when the groceries first come into our house. My wife prays over the food again while she is preparing and cooking it. Naturally we all pray over the food together when it is placed on our table before eating. We make a habit of making

a prayer over our food at every meal, and we also pray every time that we may eat any snacks between our meals as well.

Through this prayerful frugality in my daily life, and by the great grace of God, I have been able to pass on the blessings of my trying for others to many people. I do what I will for them, and the Lord God assists me in my calling as he sees fit to do.

HAVING NO ILL WILL TOWARD OTHERS

Many people hold resentments against others for the hurts and pains they believe these people have inflicted upon them. Until these resentful people can release their resentments and sincerely forgive those who caused them their emotional hurts, they cannot be free of the effect of the resentments in their lives.

Hate and resentment are just as much a living force as are love, compassion, and caring. When you hate people, you are sending negative thoughts to them. How then can you turn around and try to help another person while you are chained by the negative thoughts you have for someone else? You cannot really help others until you have freed yourself from the negativity of holding resentments, grudges, or hatred against any other person.

When I was a boy my father told me to hold nothing against anyone. That is something that I have found is very easy to say but quite difficult to practice. Children are cruel, and a boy with a clubfoot can become the butt of many painful childish pranks. My father explained that most people are completely unaware of the effect that their words or their actions have, either on themselves or on others. He told me that most people do not try to be hurtful, but those who do are usually acting from their own internal fear. They are trying to demean others only to make their own place in the world seem to be more important to them. I have thought long

and hard about those words. With my father's words in mind, and through frequent prayer, I was slowly able to sincerely forgive those who I had believed had hurt me through either word or deed.

CHARMS OR SPELLS

I gave some of the charms or spells that are used when trying for healing earlier in this book (see chapter 3) in order to give the reader an immediate idea of what the hex practice actually is. Many people who come from other places than the Pennsylvania Dutch country have never heard of the hex work. Here I shall add to the charms and spells I gave before.

There are a wide variety of verbal charms or spells that are used in trying for an illness. These are often called one or the other by different people, but I have never seen any real difference between something that is called a charm or something called a spell. They are both just prayers made to the Lord God for something that is sincerely desired by the person being prayed for. In my own work, I call charms the ones I use in trying for an illness or a physical condition that a person might have. I believe that a spell is more something that is used to gain some change in the person's life. In either event, as I have mentioned, they are both sincere prayers to the Lord for his aid. Whether they are called charms or spells, it is always just a matter of what the hexenmeister is calling them when he is praying for his client.

VARIATIONS IN TRYING FOR AN ILLNESS

In the first chapter, I described the process of trying for an illness. It is done in about the same way for almost all conditions.

However, there are two physical conditions that call for using slightly different techniques. To give you an example of this, I will illustrate the different processes of trying for burns and trying for poison ivy. In these cases of affliction, clients must often expose at least part of their body to the hexenmeister. Because of considerations of the client's modesty, another means must be used.

In trying for a burn, assuming that it has not taken off the skin, it is necessary for the hexenmeister to blow on the burn. The hexenmeister says the following charm while blowing gently upon the burned part of the person's body.

<i>Fire of God,</i>	<i>(blow)</i>
<i>Lose thy heat,</i>	<i>(blow)</i>
<i>As Judas lost his color,</i>	<i>(blow)</i>
<i>When he betrayed our Lord</i>	<i>(blow)</i>
<i>In the garden of olives.</i>	<i>(blow)</i>
<i>Amen, Amen, Amen.</i>	<i>(blow)</i>

In many cases this charm will remove all pain from the burn immediately as the breath touches it. Then more conventional healing methods, such as applying honey to the burn or using powdered sulfur and alum on the burn, can be used to promote the physical healing. Once the healing agent has been applied to the burn, the person may regain their modesty by dressing again.

When trying for poison ivy (or poison oak and sumac) blisters on the body, it is important that the person have cold running water flowing over the part of the body that has the poison ivy on it. As the water flows over it, the hexenmeister rubs that part of the body with his or her hand while reciting the following charm over and over again:

*Four angels came from the west,
Bringing fire and cold and pleasure.
Let now the poison be driven out,
As was Hagar taken from the sight of Sarah.
Amen.*

If the burn or ivy poisoning is on a part of the body other than the hands or face, the hexenmeister must be of the same sex as the person whom they are treating. In order that the male hexenmeister may treat women who come to him with these painful conditions, he will usually teach his wife or his daughter these two charms. His wife or daughter will then be the one who will treat any women who may come to him for assistance with these conditions.

Aside from these two restrictions, almost all trying for illnesses is done in the same way as I have mentioned in the first chapter of this book. No circles are ever drawn, no candles are ever lit, and no incense is ever burned. So far as I know, there is in the hex work no similarity at all to the way that any of the modern witches, wizards, magicians, or other magical people of that kind, work their healing spells.

In fact, I would go so far as to say that the entire hex practice is based on the verse in the Psalms that states: "Call upon me in the day of thy trouble and I shall deliver thee, and thou shall glorify me" (Ps. 50:15). For I really believe with all my heart that the Lord God stands ready to come to the aid and assistance of every person who sincerely calls on him, whether that person is a hexenmeister or not. It is this that makes me believe that any person who has a calling to do the hex work should develop his or her ability as much as possible. I believe that people should do this whether or not they can find anyone to teach them any of the more

subtle intricacies of the hex practice. If it is meant for them to learn these more intricate practices, they shall surely do so in the goodness of time.

Because many of the hex spells may be found in the books mentioned previously, it is unnecessary to repeat them here. As I have mentioned earlier, it is entirely possible for someone who works in this practice to write out charms or spells that may be used with success whenever the inspiration to do so comes. I will say that this writing out of specific charms and spells by hexenmeisters is probably more general than most people who are less acquainted with this practice may recognize.

There are no surefire magical spells of any kind. There are only charms and spells that work in accordance with the will of the Lord God. This is why a prayerful, firm, and sincere connection to the Lord God must first be made by anyone who wishes to acquire the ability to be of service to others by doing the hex work.

SPELL FOR A LOVER

The following spoken spell was given to me in a curious way. It is not to be found in any of the hex books that I have ever read but was given to me by a man who had it from a former lady friend. This spell for a husband was cast by the woman when she went to a planted field on a clear summer night and spoke this spell three times with great sincerity to the stars.

Seven Stars are in the Sky.

Six and Six go equal.

Five's the rain beau in his boat,

Four score's an acre.

Two shall be the Lilly O' the day

Dressed in Scarlet and Green—Oh

The one, the one, that's left alone,

It no more shall be alone.

The lady did eventually get herself a husband from using this spell. She may have written it herself for all that I know, but it did seem to work well for her. I thought that it was an interesting example of a spoken spell, although I have no idea where the spell came from. It is certainly better than many of the more direct and commanding love spells I have seen published in various books.

A PRAYER OR SPELL FOR FINDING LOST THINGS

The Pennsylvania Dutch are not the only people who use prayers for achieving some purpose in life. One of my neighbors is a Roman Catholic, and she regularly uses the following spell for finding lost things in her house. She swears that it works very well for her. It is a prayer that is made for St. Anthony to help in recovering the lost item.

Dear Saint Anthony come around,

Something's lost and can't be found.

If you find it, show it unto me

Dear Saint Anthony how glad I'll be.

SELF-HEALING A PHYSICAL CONDITION

When applying any medication to your body, such as an ointment, salve, or poultice, it is always beneficial if you pray that the intended healing occur. A prayer for this purpose is given here,

and it is one that has proven itself to be worthwhile in practice over the years. Both my father and grandfather used it, and I use it myself. My wife has used this prayer on our children to ease the bruises and pains of childhood. They are now both old enough use it on themselves.

Adonai-Elohim, May it please thee Lord to hear my prayer and to heal my affliction. My faith is entirely in thy goodness. I am healing already, for thy holiness is manifested within me, and thy spirit is manifested within my own. Amen.

FREQUENT PRAYER, PRAYING THE PSALMS

I would suggest that anyone interested in doing this hex work pray the Lord's Prayer every morning and every night. My father suggested this to me at an early age, and I have done it every day since then. In this way the ability to pray sincerely to the Lord God is gradually developed.

There are three psalms that are said to have the ability to call the attention of the angels of the Lord to those who recite them daily. They are said to bring the grace and blessings of the angelic host upon people who pray them, thus calling the favorable assistance of the angels into their life.

One or another of these psalms should be prayed every day for at least a year. Within that time people who make a regular prayer of these psalms will find that their condition in life has always changed for the better. The angels will lift them from any negative condition into which they may have fallen.

These three psalms are the twelfth, the fourteenth, and the thirty-second psalm in the King James Version of the Holy Bible.

The 11, 13, & 31 in 1st

Each of these psalms has its own particular purpose, and the person who begins praying the psalms should begin with the psalm that most closely suits their particular condition in life when they begin their year of prayer. As their condition in life improves, they should slowly change over to praying the next psalm. Which psalm they pray is always to be based on their condition in life at the time.

It is generally thought best to pray the thirty-second psalm throughout the year, adding either the twelfth or fourteenth psalms as the conditions in life warrant. Once stability returns, and the twelfth and fourteenth psalms are no longer needed, the person should continue to pray the thirty-second psalm. In this way, the thirty-second psalm becomes the one most frequently prayed. In time, all of the former negative conditions will slowly pass out of the life of the person who is sincerely making these prayers.

Praying the twelfth psalm will request the angels to require others to stop speaking badly of you. It is thought to be very effective in overcoming persecution and slander from anyone who may oppose either you or your work in the world.

Praying the fourteenth psalm will identify you as a righteous person to the angels. It will work to cast out of your life those who would lead you astray from the path of virtue and truth. It is interesting that when I began praying this psalm as an adult, a friend of mine whom I had known since high school quite suddenly stopped calling me. I have no idea what his negative influence on me was, but he certainly disappeared quickly. Several years later I learned that he had been taking money from the funds of our local fire company.

The thirty-second psalm is one that calls love, grace, and mercy, upon those who pray it. It is most effective in improving the life of the person who prays it every day. I have found this psalm very useful in praying for those who feel beaten down in life. People who have lost work have even used it to obtain a new job.

44 There is one other psalm that is usefully prayed by almost all people. This is the forty-fifth psalm, which is used to keep one from accepting any negativity, or evil thoughts, from others. It should be sincerely prayed at least three times each week, but making it a part of your daily prayers is far better. Praying this psalm daily also works well for those who seem to constantly be standing in their own way, those who are working either consciously or unconsciously against their own best interests.

PRAYING THE PSALMS AT BEDTIME

The twenty-third psalm is known to all Christians as a psalm that calls upon God's protection for both those praying it and those near and dear to them. It is good for a husband and wife to pray this psalm together every night before retiring, as it puts their thoughts into a more restful and spiritual place as they prepare themselves for bed. If desired, but especially when there is something troubling them, they may follow this prayer with the Lord's Prayer. That prayer prepares them for sleep and a good night's rest in the arms of the Lord God. Many times, problems that may seem difficult or impossible in the light of day are solved in a dream at night when these psalms are regularly prayed.

These prayers and the continual practice of praying together before bedtime assist in bringing the family closer together and in maintaining a strong family harmony. A trite but very true saying

is that the family that prays together stays together. I have found this in my own experience when I advised a coworker who was having marital problems to begin praying every night. Within two weeks of praying alone, his wife joined him in his evening prayer. After a month or two, the strife in their marriage dissipated, and the divorce that had been threatened by her was no longer spoken of. They now make a practice of praying together every morning and every evening.

HAVING A RELIGIOUS COMMITMENT

Being a believing and churchgoing Christian is also, at least in my opinion, a prerequisite to success in this hex work. I know a few hexenmeisters who are not very regular in their church attendance and who still seem to be able to try for and manifest such cures as the Lord allows. I cannot see myself joining them in their frequent absence from church however.

For myself, church attendance has always seemed to be a necessity. It has never been my goal in life to gain power, as I wish only to provide for my family and to educate and encourage my children to success in their life. Other than this, my only other aim in life has always been to assist those who may come to me for aid.

I have seen that those who desire only to develop power over others often come to what I perceive as a bad end. I cannot say how they see their end, as I have abandoned judging people. Instead, I watch myself, and strive to be the best husband and father, as well as the best hexenmeister, that I can possibly be. I feel that if I do the best I can at that, I can rely on the Lord God to take care of all of the rest.

CHAPTER 5

THE WRITTEN MAGIC OF THE HIMMELBRIEF



THE HIMMELBRIEF IN GERMAN WITCHCRAFT

The German word *Himmelbrief* refers to a "heavenly letter." It may be a letter written to someone in heaven, such as one written to the spirit of one of the departed, or it may be a letter written to gain the assistance of God in heaven. In many cases, the *himmelbrief* is a letter that is written according to a particular and long-established formula. Of course, many of these traditional formulas have their origins in a myth of some kind, showing that they were supposed

to give the person who possessed the letter either great power, or great protection.

During the Thirty Years War, 1618-1648, many of the soldiers of both the Protestant and Catholic armies carried these himmelbriefs with them for protection. They were written to ensure that they would return home safely to their families. Carrying these heavenly letters was also fairly common among many of the Hessian soldiers who fought for England in the American Revolution. Such letters that were carried for protection then are still being written and used for the same purpose today.

THE HEXENMEISTER AND THE HIMMELBRIEF

One of the primary sources of income for a well-respected Pennsylvania Dutch hexenmeister has always been preparing and selling personal himmelbriefs for their clients. Originally these letters were laboriously written out using a quill pen and ink made from soot or pokeberries. Frequently they were written on expensive linen paper. Because of the cost of this paper, the completed himmelbrief often sold for as much as a dollar or two in the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries. This made them sufficiently prized such that many of these letters have been passed down in some of the older Pennsylvania Dutch families.

Today these himmelbriefs are rarely written out by hand. Instead, they are usually made in quantity, reproduced on a Xerox machine, printed at a quick printers, or even sometimes printed on a personal computer printer by the hexenmeister himself. People who use them assume them to be valuable for the text that they contain. Nevertheless, himmelbriefs are frequently sold quite inexpensively as curios in the tourist shops of the Pennsylvania

Dutch country. In this case there is little understanding of the potential power that may actually lie behind these truly magical letters. There is obviously a great difference between a hexenmeister's handwritten himmelbrief and one that has been printed or copied and sold in a curio shop. The text of the two himmelbriefs may be the same, but the effort and concentration put into writing the himmelbrief by the hexenmeister is missing. It is for this skill that the person purchasing a handwritten himmelbrief is paying.

Assuming that they are correctly prepared, a himmelbrief can be a potent force for gaining the goal for which it is written. In the case of a letter written for protection, it has been known to save a person from physical harm. These letters may also be used to improve the life of the person carrying them or for any other purpose that may be desired by the writer for the recipient.

THE PETITION OF THE PEASANT OF COLOGNE AND OTHER LEGENDS

One of the more enduring legends concerning himmelbriefs is that of the peasant of Cologne. It tells the tale of a poor boy who lost both of his parents and was unable to find anyone to take him in. According to this story, he went out to the edge of the city and fervently prayed to God that someone or something would give him aid. He then walked back through the city to see what fortune God would hold for him. As he passed a shop, a letter miraculously fell from the sky. He caught it in his hand and, as he was illiterate, just placed it in his clothing. As he continued his random walk through the town, several surprising things occurred.

First, an old market woman stopped him and offered him some food from her stall, saying that he looked like a hungry lad. He ate the proffered food gratefully and thanked her for her charity. Then he prayed, asking God to bless her for her charity toward him in his hunger.

Continuing on his way, he met a man who came rushing out of his shop and seized his arm. The man asked him if he were apprenticed to anyone; the boy said no and told him his sad story. The man took him in his shop and asked him to become his apprentice.

The man was a master jeweler. He told the lad that he had dozed at his bench and dreamed of meeting the very same person as the young lad. The dream said that this lad would in time make both his own fortune and that of his master. The man was a good teacher, and in time the boy married the man's daughter and took over the man's business. Later on, he became wealthy and quite famous as the master jeweler of Cologne.

Having a desire to improve himself, the humble apprentice boy eventually learned to read. When he finally read the letter that had fallen into his hands, he found that this is what the miraculous letter actually said:

Keep your faith and praise God. You shall be successful. Your heartfelt prayers reach a higher power than you believe. The honor you do your master will serve you well on this earth and in heaven. Live your life to protect the weak, clothe the naked, feed the hungry, and respect the strong. In this way you will live your life in praise of God. Carry this letter with you all of the days of your life and it will bring to you all of the blessings and the great success in life that you seek. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Naturally, the boy never parted with the letter. He carried it close to his body all of the days of his life, removing it from his person only to sleep.

There are several other stories of the same kind, all of which end with the person believing that the himmelbrief has a magical, if not an almost divine, origin. Many of the himmelbriefs that are used today have this kind of story attached to them. Every one of these tales that I have ever seen is actually a pleasant myth, or in the common parlance of the better educated today, an urban legend.

One of the more popular of these himmelbrief stories is the following tale. It formed a part of the himmelbrief given to Arthur H. Lewis, the author of the book *Hex*. There were actually three himmelbriefs on this printed sheet. The one below was the middle one, the other two are shown below as separate himmelbriefs. They are all identified as being connected with the book *Hex*.

This letter was sent from heaven, and found in Holstein in the year of our Lord 1724. It was written in golden letters and soared above Wanda [Wanna?], but, if anyone attempted to seize it, it vanished. In 1771 however, someone formed the idea of copying the letter, and giving its contents to the world. To this person the letter drew nigh, and he was able to copy the same, and to it read as follows.

He who worketh on the Sabbath day shall be damned: thou shalt not work upon this day, but attend divine services and pray from the bottom of your heart. Thou shalt share thy riches with the poor. Thou shalt not be like the beasts of the field. I command thee: six days shalt thou labor and be heavily laden, but the seventh day shalt thou rest, and keep it holy, for thou shalt hear

the word of God. If thou doest not keep this commandment, I shall punish thee by an infliction of famine, pestilence and war. Amen.

I command you, also not to prolong your work into the night before the Sabbath day, for every one be he young or old, should pray that his sins be forgiven. Use not my name only for the gain of gold or silver. Shun all human vices and lusts of the flesh, for as surely as I have created you, so surely can I destroy you. Be not false of tongue. Honor thy father and mother, that thy days may be long on this earth which the Lord thy God giveth thee. Bear not false witness against thy neighbor, for then I shall be pleased with thee. Whosoever does not believe this letter and act in accordance therewith, he shall be damned and forsaken, and neither luck nor blessing shall attend him; for I say unto thee that Jesus Christ has written this letter and it is sinful to contradict its truth. Whosoever hath this letter and does not reveal the same shall be damned by the Christian Church; everyone is assigned to circulate this letter, and he who believes in the mercy of God shall have his sins forgiven. Be assured, I will be gracious to all who believe herein; he who doubted shall die the everlasting death, for I shall punish all on the Judgment day who are unable to give an account of their sins. Whosoever shall have this letter with him shall be safe from thunder. A woman in possession of this letter will have healthy, lovely children. Keep the commandments I have given you through the holy angel Michael in the name of Jesus Christ: Amen.

THE WRITTEN WORD AS A SPELL

In this section, I have relied on my daughter's superior education in both history and anthropology. Much of the following is actually her work, although she refuses to take credit for it. She has taught me a great deal and explained several things that I did not formerly understand.

In these days when most of the people in our society can read and write, we find it difficult to appreciate that in much of Europe as recently as two hundred years ago, the common people were almost entirely illiterate. In those times, the written word was considered a kind of miracle to the majority of the illiterate masses.

These illiterate people looked at people who could read and write as if they possessed some kind of magical power. On those rare occasions when these people had to communicate with someone in another place, they would have to go to a public scrivener. The scrivener, or letter writer, would write the letter for them, usually for quite a stiff fee. At the other end of the journey, another public scrivener would read the letter to the intended recipient.

That this is almost beyond our comprehension today is an indication of how deep an impression the inroads of free public education have made in our own time. At one time, education and literacy were reserved for the religious and the upper economic classes. The working class only had to learn the trade that they used to earn their daily bread. It was not felt necessary that members of the lower classes should be able to either read or write.

The nobility was rarely educated either. Their tasks were fighting and governing, not learning to read, write, and do sums. Among the nobility, formal education was frequently considered to be beneath their class, just as it was considered to be above

those of the peasant and worker class. Thus it remained to the members of the religious, the numerous officials of the courts, and the bureaucrats of the government to pursue education in order to maintain their privileged status.

Because these attendants to the church and nobility had a monopoly on education, they often used it to oppress those below them in order to gain even greater advantages for themselves. It has always been this way whenever privilege was restricted to the few. One of the ways they oppressed the uneducated was in making the entire process of gaining any kind of education more difficult. Latin was the common language of the educated people of Europe. Many highly educated officials were able to speak to the common citizens in the local vernacular only with the gravest difficulty.

Hebrew, as the medium of transliteration of the vernacular language, was more often used as a medium of communication among the Jewish merchants and bankers of the Middle Ages. These merchants could see that the lack of education among both nobility and the commoners was a stumbling block to European Catholic trade and commerce. They took full advantage of this situation. The male Jewish population was the largest concentration of literate people in all of European society during these times.

To the average workman or peasant, Roman letters, written either in Latin or in the vernacular language, were a complete mystery. How much more of a mystery were the occasional scraps of written communications that may have come their way written in Hebrew letters? It was in this way that Hebrew letters developed their fascination as a language of the true occult. Hebrew letters were filled with magic and mystery to the common people.

It was not Hebrew words that were used in these communications, as at that time Hebrew was a dead language. Until Hebrew was revived deliberately in the mid 1940s, as the language of the new nation of Israel, it was not used conversationally anywhere on this Earth. Instead, the common language of the nation of residence was transliterated, using the letters of the Hebrew alphabet. Thus, Old High German became Yiddish when written with Hebrew letters. Castilian, the language of Spain, developed into Ladino when the same change of appearance by transliteration into Hebrew was applied to it.

The effects of this transliteration may be seen in the Jewish Talmud, where most of what we know about Middle French today comes from the transliterated words of the Talmudic commentators. These rabbis wrote their comments in that language, but they transliterated the words into the Hebrew alphabet, with which they were more familiar.

As these languages were fit into Hebrew characters, so was Latin when some medieval scholars applied to it the same rules of transliteration that the Jewish scholars had used. To this day, occultists occasionally find written spells and charms that make no sense at all in Hebrew but whose meaning unfolds immediately when the Hebrew letters are transliterated back into the Latin language.

The peak of transliteration from one language into the alphabet of another probably reached its height in the days of the great Abbot Trithemius, who wrote an interesting book concerning secret alphabets. As the mentor and friend of Cornelius Heinrich Agrippa, who dedicated his *Three Books of Occult Philosophy* to him, Trithemius was one of the great intellectual leaders in the magical and occult revival that occurred around the time of the

stirrings of the great religious reformation that swept across Europe.

A more modern book concerning these many strange alphabets, often used for transliteration for spells, is *Magical Alphabets* by Nigel Pennick (see Suggestions for Further Reading). Mr. Pennick goes into far more detail than I can on this very interesting subject.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF LANGUAGE FOR RELIGIOUS PURPOSES

Lest we misbelieve that magical practice was the first use of written language, we must take note here that written language almost certainly had its origins among the class that continually maintains power over the masses. This is the priestly caste, which forms an establishment that no state may bend and to which all citizens may be made to show at least a grudging respect. It is interesting to note that despite almost all priestly castes worldwide professing abhorrence for violence, these classes always manage to place themselves in practical control of the warrior classes whenever castes and positions in the social order are assigned.

Keeping secret and to itself all that it can, the priestly class has sheltered to its bosom all discoveries and inventions that it could use. It has also condemned and persecuted all those inventions and discoveries that have threatened its power.

In addition, the priestly leadership has opposed any information or criticism rising up from the masses that might disrupt their monopoly of knowledge. One example is the way that the Christian priesthood has opposed new developments in medical practice over the centuries.

This social effect has been worldwide and has not ever been restricted to any one religion or culture. The dead hand of the priestly caste has been widespread among all known cultures, throughout all human history. Thus we may be assured that the probable origin of written language was among the controlling clerics of some very faraway time. We can also be assured that written language only came to the attention of the common populace of the time as a gradual leakage from the secrets of the religion, when that particular religion was in a state of rapid decline.

THE COMMERCIAL AND ACCOUNTING USAGE OF LANGUAGE

Naturally the most practical use for written language is in the promotion of trade and commerce, in which all those nations who wish to be wealthy participate. As soon as the religious secret of written languages leaked out to the world, it was promptly applied to the keeping of records, the uses of accounting, for permanence of contracts, and for all other types of commercial transactions. However, we shall see that commercial purposes were not always the predominant use for such a release of the secret of writing.

CRETE: THE RECORDS OF THE STOREHOUSE OF THE TEMPLE

Before the Cretan language was deciphered, many anthropologists believed that decipherment of these unknown characters might reveal to us many of the secrets of the inhabitants of that fabled island. By 2000 B.C. Cretan civilization had reached such heights of technology that they had municipal water and sewage systems, central heating, and many other conveniences that we usually think of as being very modern. As there were quite a lot

of examples of these ancient writings, translating them was an exciting prospect.

However, this promised revelation did not happen. When the Cretan Linear languages were deciphered, it was found that most of the records of ancient Crete were actually storehouse receipts from the various temples and other associated storerooms. In fact, very few of the writings were of anything else at all. So much for learning a great deal about the secrets of their ancient civilization.

Crete was one of the cultures in which it was apparently held that sacred and religious information was not to be committed to anything as secular as the written word. There have been other cultures that seemed to have held this view. Until the British in India began writing down the oral religious texts, the Indian Brahman priests had the same view. They required that all religious texts be committed to memory and not profaned by writing them down.

On the other hand, there have been cultures that apparently believed the opposite. They seemed to think that the written word was best used for sacred texts and rituals. In the remains of these cultures, their religious writings and mythologies predominated.

PHOENICIA: THE COMMERCIAL ACCOUNTING OF TRADERS

In Phoenicia, commercial recording and accounting in the Arcadian and Phoenician language were at least partly responsible for the development of their high level of civilization. The use of written communications made it possible to preserve such things as ship routings, and safe anchorages. This made it possible to transfer the information from one shipmaster to another. In addition, it was now possible to have written inventories of the ships' cargo, as well as to make receipts and have records of the traders' actual

successes in their trade on each voyage. It is also possible that at this time the transfer of real property by written document began.

Much of the written remains of ancient Phoenicia also concern myth and history. It is reasonably certain that it was in ancient Phoenicia that the written magical spell was born. As they were used among the populace, they reached our notice in the clay tablets that have been excavated from those times. Several writings have been found that suggest that there were spoken spells from that time as well. Many of these spells are nicely written down on clay tablets, as if they were made for the practicing magician, shaman, or witch doctor to refer to.

SUMER: THE BEGINNINGS OF MONEY AND BANKING

An eminent anthropologist, Dr. Samuel Kramer, once wrote a very interesting book titled *History Begins at Sumer*. My daughter tells me that this book is outdated today, but she does not argue that it still tells the story of the origin of many things that we take for granted today. One of these was the banking system, including what we now call national central banking. Money, in the form of denominated coinage, apparently originated in Sumer as well.

Sumer was the absolute peak of the development of the commercial accounting and finance business at the time. It was also there that we find the origin of many of the written financial instruments, legal contracts, and other forms of business documents that we still use today. All of this was due to the further development of written language. Sumerian and Arcadian are still recognizable and useful, although they are very dead languages. While their use is confined to those few academic specialists who

pursue work in that field, there are many books that tell of the interesting discoveries of these excellent and scholarly men.

It was quite interesting to me to learn that among those ancient clay tablet documents there are at least a few whose translations are very obviously similar to *himmelbriefs*, as they are written spells and charms, while other texts are obviously written prayers. We must make note of the fact that written prayers are not at all a new thing. As the writer of Ecclesiastes said, "there is no new thing under the sun" (1:9).

BABYLONIA: FINANCING AND INTERNATIONAL TRADE

After the invasion of the Aryans and the conquest of Persia, by Darius (I believe), the use of the written language gained an immense prestige in the ancient Middle East. Aside from freeing the captive Jews and restoring the holy places of Israel, as is mentioned in the Bible, Babylonia quickly became the financial center of the Middle East. This was once again due to the use of a written language. Under the Aryan kings of Persia, there was a great expansion of trade in the Persian nation. Merchants from Babylonian Persia traveled as far as China and England in search of trade goods.

There was also a freedom of religion in the Persian Empire. Although they were pagans, religious freedom in the old Persian Empire was so widespread that it was to eventually set the pattern for the later Roman Empire's decrees of religious toleration. The priests of the various Babylonian gods used what we might call prayer cards to assist them in speaking correctly the precise words of their complex rituals. It would seem that the ancient Sumerians and the Arcadians did the same, but there seems to be less evidence of that fact.

THE SACREDNESS OF ALPHABETS

In these ancient times the alphabets became sacred of themselves. Even the Hebrew alphabet changed its form, selecting the block Aramaic characters as the formal written style in which to write their sacred scriptures. It is these Aramaic letters that we usually think of as being written Hebrew today.

For some people, any alphabet different from the one they are accustomed to is an oddity. Because of its oddity, the strange alphabet is often thought to be imbued with magical properties. Just as the Hebrew alphabet was a special and magical thing in the Middle Ages, so the old Babylonian and Sumerian alphabets eventually became sacred and magical things. This happened in Babylon and throughout Persia as time passed on.

I have seen this effect in myself. A friend of mine showed me what he thought was a particularly powerful protective spell. I copied it out, intending to make use of it one day. Imagine my surprise when I saw similar letters on the television set during the president's visit to the Soviet Union. I went into town and asked a man who I considered to be very wise about these letters. He told me that they were Russian letters, called Cyrillic. The characters in what I believed was a spell were taken from the alphabet designed by St. Cyril for promulgating the Christian faith among the illiterate Russian people when he converted them from their pagan ways in the Middle Ages.

This is one reason that the good Abbott John Trithemius wrote his famous book about the various magical alphabets that were in use at the time. When you use an unusual alphabet, but one which you personally are very familiar with, to write out the written charms and spells you use, you may be surprised by the

way in which they are accepted as being very powerful spells by the people you make them up for.

EGYPTIAN WRITTEN SPELLS IN REMAINING MONUMENTS

Probably the most famous written spells are those of ancient Egypt. They were written in a language and style that the Greeks called sacred writing. We get our word for them, *hieroglyphs*, from the Greek words for "sacred writing." There are a large number of these written spells known to us today.

These ancient Egyptian scripts are absolutely beautifully written. They were written down on papyrus by specially trained scribes. Because the dry air of Egypt preserved them, we have a variety of them to study today.

Through the accidental discovery of a stone tablet in Rosetta, Egypt, by an officer of the French army and through the dedicated work of hundreds of translators, these hieroglyphs and their translations are available to us today. They may be used in spells if desired, or we may copy them from the spells and prayers of ancient Egypt as found in such works of the time as the Book of the Dead, or the Leyden Papyrus, and the many others that have been published. Most of these books, even including a hieroglyphic dictionary, have been republished in inexpensive paper editions over the past few years.

The Egyptian people, especially from the first to the fifth dynasty, were the world's greatest spell casters. Their magicians had many thousands of spells available to them. Many of these spells are available to us today if we take the time to go into such museums as have them in their libraries.

The Museum of the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia is one such museum, another is the Oriental Institute in

Chicago. As I have never been across the Mississippi River, I do not know if there are any such museums on the west coast, but I would think that there probably must be.

THE NORTHERN RUNES, AND OTHER MAGICAL ALPHABETS

Among the Norse and Germanic peoples there developed a system of writing known as runes. Developed in the early Middle Ages, this system of writing is returning to popularity today and is especially used in magical workings. There are now many people who do divination with these runes.

Originally the runes were carved on uniform pieces of ash wood, about three inches long by about an inch wide. Now they are often marked on ceramic tiles and used for divination in that way. There was originally a ritual process followed when a rune reader gave a reading with the ash runes. I believe that it has been much simplified by those people who read the runes for others today.

From the time of their first development, the runes were used for writing spells and curses. They were considered a sacred language because they were supposedly originated by the Norse Germanic god Odin, who hung himself on the world tree, a sacrifice of himself to himself, as he said, to obtain the runes. From this sacred origin they passed into being used for memorials, boundary markers, and such. Even so, the runes still remained a sacred written language.

Using runes to write a charm or spell is quite effective. They are more believable as a charm or spell to those living in the Pennsylvania Dutch country than, say, a charm written in Egyptian hieroglyphics would be. I have used them several times,

transliterating the English words of the written charm into the runic letters as I concentrated on the effect they were to have.

MAGICAL WRITINGS OF THE RUNES

There are several good books available on the magical work of the runes. The one I like the best is called *Futhark, a Handbook of Rune Magic*, by Mr. Eldred Thorsson. This book gives more complete directions concerning working magic with the runes than I can. It covers areas that I hardly know anything at all about. Mr. Thorsson is a real rune worker, while I am just a hexenmeister.

SAMPLES OF HIMMELBRIEFS

Here are a number of sample himmelbriefs that I have found to be beneficial in my own work. You may use these as you desire, and may they be as effective for you as I have found them to be for me.

The first himmelbrief is one that is used against envy, gossip and slander.

By Christ's blood and by Mary's prayers, let us hear no more of argument and dissension. Through their mercy, all those who carry this with them shall be held safe from gossip and slander. Let the holy child distribute food to those in need and allow the great saints to ease the heartache of the distressed. For no envious eye shall seek out one who carries this on their person; nor shall the inquisitive discover their secrets. The Lord's grace shall be with thee and shall guide thee through all obstacles in thy life. Amen, Amen, Amen.

This is written out for a nursing mother when she begins to feed her child.

Now let the abundant milk with which mother Mary fed the infant Jesus flow, and let nourishment come to the babe in arms. Amen

It was said that the following himmelbrief was carried by men at arms in the Thirty Years War. While I do not know about that, I do know that my grandfather wrote out several of these for some local men who fought in the Second World War, and again wrote some for men who fought in Korea. My father and I have also written them out for other men who were in the army and could be exposed to combat.

The peace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with me. I, _____ (name) _____ pray in Jesus' name that no sword shall cut me, no knife shall wound me, that no shot shall pierce me. I pray by the spear that pierced the side of Christ, by the sword that took the life of St. John the Baptist, and by the keys of lead that hold fast the secret of heaven. Shot stand still and forbear to injure me. I pray you by heaven and earth, and by the last judgment, that you save me, a child of God, from all harm and danger. Amen.

Another himmelbrief for this same purpose was printed on the sheet of three himmelbriefs given to Arthur H. Lewis, the author of the book *Hex*.

The Protection When One Is About to Meet an Enemy

In the name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost. I go forward with the strength of God. I go forward in the might

of God. I go forward in the blood of Christ, who is powerful against any enemy, whether visible or invisible. God, the Father is before me, God the Son is beside me, God the Holy Ghost is above me. And just as the blood of Christ on the cross was shed for me, so all bullets shall be fired past me. In the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. I survey you from above. I conquer you from beneath. And I continually lead you.

In the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

Amen! Amen! Amen!

Here is a himmelbrief for protection against evil when traveling.

Let me walk out in peace, let me walk about in peace, let me go my way without harm. Let me go about my business with the blessings of my Lord on my head. In all my travels let me fear neither living nor dead. In the name of the wanderer who preached mercy to all, may Jesus accompany me on all my travels. Amen.

The following home and protection letter was given to Arthur H. Lewis, the author of the book *Hex*, by a hexenmeister in York, Pennsylvania. It was not included in the book but apparently was offered as an inducement to purchase the book, being passed out freely at the store where the book was being sold. I loaned the book out to someone, and thus lost it, but the letter stayed with me. I reproduce it here as one example of the many Xeroxed and printed himmelbriefs that are available in curio stores today.

Home and Protection Letter

Just as Christ remained still at the Mount of Olives, so shall all guns be still: Whosoever hath this letter about him shall be safe from the enemy's weapons of destruction. God will preserve him from robbers and murderers; it shall make him impervious to all deadly weapons that may be brought to bear upon him, by command of our most gracious Master, Jesus Christ.

God is with him who carries this heavenly letter in war and in peace; he will be protected from all danger—in the distress of the visitation of fire or water it shall protect him. Whosoever doubts the truth of this may attach a copy of this letter to the neck of a dog and then fire upon him, and he will be convinced of its truthfulness. Who has this letter with him will not be captured by the enemy nor wounded by his weapons. Amen: As surely as Christ has lived, died, and ascended to heaven, as surely as he has wandered upon the earth, so surely shall it be impossible to shoot or stab the bearer; everything shall be free from molestation.

I conjure all weapons in this world, in the name of our Savior's blood, that no bullet shall strike me, be it cast of gold, silver, iron, or lead. God in heaven makes you secure and free from all; in the name of God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit: Amen.

WORKING WITH A HIMMELBRIEF

OUTLINING, DESIGNING, AND WRITING THE HIMMELBRIEF FOR THE GREATEST EFFECT

You must always remember that writing a himmelbrief is casting a spell. It must be made with the greatest concentration and care that you can apply to it. Whenever you write out a himmelbrief you must think constantly of the effect it is to have on the one who is receiving it. Understanding this process is vitally important to writing out a successful himmelbrief.

You should always write a himmelbrief on a blank piece of paper, not ever on one that has printing on the other side. The better the quality of paper you use, the better you and the person who receives it will respect the himmelbrief when you write it.

My father could find linen paper, but I have been unsuccessful in locating any. I have used a vellum paper in the past, which I obtained from a friend. Unfortunately, I can locate no more of it at our local stationery store. I now use a 24-pound cotton paper to write my himmelbriefs on. You can buy this paper at many stationery stores in their quality paper section.

I suggest writing the himmelbrief with a pen, using a waterproof black India ink. I use a steel point pen and an ink well, but I suppose that a ballpoint pen would do as well. The most important point is the mental concentration and care that you use when you are writing out the himmelbrief.

Some people use colored inks and may paint designs with watercolor paint on their himmelbriefs. I do not follow this practice myself, for I am no artist. I am not opposed to this practice if the artwork is done neatly and with some skill. I might suggest that if you wish to do this, the design should be drawn quite

carefully and that at least one or two practice attempts should be made before the final himmelbrief is written out.

COMBINING THE HIMMELBRIEF WITH OTHER MAGICAL PROCESSES

Many years ago, when I was in high school, I was so unfortunate as to break my left leg, which proved in the end one of God's blessings. As soon as I could get around on my crutches, I went to the library each day, and there I read from morning until night. Through this practice I learned many wonderful things that have stood me in good stead all of my life.

I learned that the ancient Egyptians would write out a spell on a piece of their paper, called papyrus. They would then wash the ink off into a glass of water and have the person to be treated with the spell drink the water. I have used this with several written charms, changing it only in that I prayed over the water three times before giving it to the person to drink. In all cases this has had as salutary an effect, being just as if these people had prayed the spell themselves many times.

The same may also be done in a bath. Place the himmelbrief in the tub, and after the ink washes off have the person wash in the water in the tub. The person should stay in the tub for some time, soaking in the water as well. When I tried this practice, I prayed over the water in the tub when I prepared the bath for the person. I also asked the person to scrub his body with the paper of the himmelbrief, although the paper soon disintegrated in the tub.

I believe that when the power of the water is added to the power of the written spell, the power of the elemental force of water is added to the power of the himmelbrief. It seems that this combination has a considerably stronger effect than just giving people the himmelbrief to carry with them. Whenever it is possi-

ble to do so, I have used this technique of combining the power of the elemental forces with written spells to enhance the action of them both.

I came across another technique in my reading that seemed fitting to use, although the idea was new to me. I wrote out a petition for the sale of a property for a neighbor. I told the person for whom I wrote it to bury the petition in a corner of the field that they wished to sell. He did so, and his property sold right away and at a decent price. Seeing that this happened so successfully, I immediately adopted this practice, and now I recommend it to you. Below is the petition I wrote for this purpose.

Through the grace of God and the prayers of the angels, let my voice be heard among the clamoring multitudes. This part of my land is to be sold, I pray that the Lord let it be sold at a good price to a decent buyer, with the blessing of God upon the purchaser. May the glory of God be with the buyer and the seller of the land, and may the peace of Jesus Christ prevail upon this land, and all that may be upon it. Amen.

SPIRIT WORKING WITH HIMMELBRIEFS

I wrote a himmelbrief for protection from negative spirits when I was first married. I placed it over the door of the house that I had begun purchasing for my wife and myself the day before our wedding. It has remained there ever since, and I have had no problems with spirits in my house at all. I supposed that I could write a better himmelbrief today, but I am satisfied that the one I wrote then is still doing well for my family. Here it is.

Through God's grace, and Jesus' blood, let my prayer be perpetual, and let it be answered in accordance with his word. Protect my house from spirits of evil. I pray thee, oh Lord, that it be a safe place in which to bring my wife and to raise the family such as you give me through your bounty. Let there be no foul spirits here, nor let there be any dangerous entities enter into this place. Let me always reside here in peace and in love and harmony. I pray this in the name of Jesus Christ, who has come to wash away the sins of this world. Amen.

KEEPING THE DEAD FROM WALKING WITH HIMMELBRIEFS

Now, it comes about on occasion that a person known for wickedness dies and is prepared for burial. In the particular event I am thinking of, the daughter of the deceased woman came to me in a state of great fright. Her recently deceased mother, who was one of the evil witches I mentioned earlier, had told her on her death bed that she would return to haunt her and would ruin her life unless she decided to follow the old woman's evil ways. As she expired, she again told her daughter that she must do as she had been told and turn to evil or the mother would ensure that she would suffer the consequences.

The day after the woman died, her spirit appeared to her daughter. The spirit told her once again that she must turn to her mother's evil ways or suffer the consequences. At that time the mother's spirit told the daughter that she would first separate her from her husband if she did not do as she had said.

This apparition frightened the daughter half out of her wits. Having seen her mother's evil ways in her youth, she had become

a believing and dedicated churchgoing Christian woman. The daughter was now a married woman and was quite fearful of her mother's haunting her. She was well aware of the power that her mother possessed, as she had already made her life miserable when she had first decided to go to church. She was well aware that this was no idle threat and that her mother's spirit could wreak havoc on both her husband and her family.

I told the distraught woman that I would prepare a himmelbrief for her to put in the casket with her mother's body. I wrote out the himmelbrief, and the daughter placed it in the casket herself, just before the casket was closed and taken in the hearse to the cemetery for burial. This is the himmelbrief I wrote.

As Christ commanded that the dead should bury the dead, in his name I tell _____ (name) _____ that she must remain here in patient waiting until our Lord comes in glory for her judgment. I pray that our Lord let her not attempt to walk abroad, let her not trouble the living, and let her not disturb those whom she knew in life in any way. In the name of Jesus Christ, the savior and redeemer of us all. Amen.

I do believe that this himmelbrief was effective. The woman's daughter told me a month or more later that there had been no further apparitions of her mother. She added that her mother's spirit had not been seen in the house at all. Six months later, with the mother's house thoroughly scrubbed clean of all its evil influences, there had still been no sign of the mother's evil spirit.

MAKING THE SPIRIT WORK WITH A HIMMELBRIEF

By the same token, a himmelbrief may be used to make a spirit work. In the case of a man who lived near my home with his wife and four young children, I assisted them in the following way. When he died suddenly in an accident at his work, I wrote the following himmelbrief to call on the spirit of the dead man to continue to provide for his family. Through this effort there was never want or lack in the house, although the family kept a frugal lifestyle of necessity.

Through God's grace and a mother's prayers, let this plea be heard, oh Lord. May provender and sustenance be furnished to the house of _____ (name) _____ through the efforts of their husband and father _____ (name) _____ to the glory of God and in Jesus' name. Amen.

Three years after the accident, the insurance company paid a handsome settlement to the widow and her children. That money made their life much easier. In the intervening time it is my opinion that the constant anonymous deliveries of food and fuel that were donated to their home were obtained primarily through the intervention of the spirit of her deceased husband.

COMMUNICATING WITH THE DEAD THROUGH A HIMMELBRIEF

It is also possible to write letters to the dead. These letters are often written in the form of a himmelbrief. In this case they should always contain a prayer for the rest and salvation of the departed. In this way, no matter what news is being sent to the spirit, there is always a wish for the spirit's peace and salvation.

There should also be a prayer made for the repose of the spirit when the himmelbrief is prayed over.

SOME VARIATIONS FROM THE STRICT HEX PRACTICE

I am a tinker, or a putterer, as my wife calls it. I like to experiment and play with different kinds of things and have had frequent successes in doing so. This tinkering is not confined to my workshop; it affects my work as a hexenmeister as well. Below are some of the more successful results of my tinkering. May they be as successful for you as they have been for me.

USING HIMMELBRIEFS WITH SAINTS AND DEITIES

In the Roman Catholic religion there are a number of saints, many more than just the twelve apostles of Jesus Christ and St. Paul, who brought the word of Christ to the Gentiles. These apostles are the only saints, if they may be said to be saints, who are recognized by many Protestant denominations. Roman Catholics believe they can ask these saints to intercede with God to grant various specific things. For example, St. Lucy is asked for help in healing of the eyes, Jude for lost causes, and Anthony for finding lost objects, as I mentioned before with the example of my neighbor. I had always wanted to know more about this aspect of the Roman Catholic religion.

When I was reading in the public library I found a book called *The Golden Legend*, which had in it legends of many of the saints. In reading this book, I learned many interesting things about the Roman Catholic saints. I later bought a paperback book, *The Penguin Dictionary of the Saints*, which told many other stories of these and many other saints (see Suggestions for Further Reading).

Thus, as I understand it, the Catholic saints are like go-betweens, who are each in charge of a specific area of life on Earth and are charged to bring about God's will in that specific area. I thought about this idea for some time and finally concluded that it was worth at least an experiment. Rather than try to follow Catholic doctrine, however, I decided to adapt the idea to the Greek and Roman deities, who also were in charge of specific areas of existence. I decided that these deities could also be like an intercessor to go to the Lord God for a particular purpose. I made a list of the heavenly bodies the Romans ascribed to the days of the week, most of which refer to a deity in their pantheon. I decided that when something came up on that day that suited their natures, I would refer the problem to their care.

The list I made up was the following:

- Sunday: the Sun. Life itself, the physical vitality of life, the changes of the seasons, heat and warmth. The element Fire.
- Monday: the Moon. The emotions, and emotional changes. The woman's cycle, the nurturing feminine. Offspring, childbirth, and the magical powers of both men and women. The element Water.
- Tuesday: the planet Mars. Masculine energy, power and force of the male. Action, quarrels and arguments, violence, disputes and fighting of all kinds. Lust rather than love.
- Wednesday: the planet Mercury. Thought, craftiness, scheming, and theft, but also the intellectual nature, rational thought, and the mind itself. Tricks, practical jokes, and humor as well. The element Air, communications, speech, and writing.

Thursday: the planet Jupiter. Abundance, prosperity, wealth. Banks and bankers, finance, loans and borrowings, generosity, charity given and received. Cash and investments, and the return made on them.

Friday: the planet Venus. Beauty, art, decoration, what we wish for, the beautiful and lovely in the feminine. Sumptuous, regal, and elegant things. Envy and greed, and its effects on us.

Saturday: the planet Saturn. Restriction, coldness, the lack of warmth, the fears and hesitations that plague us. Feelings of unworthiness, our disrespect for ourselves, and the inhibitions that hold us back in life. In many respects, the element Earth.

Once I had made up this list I thought about it some more before I did anything about it. Then an occasion came when I could put it to practical use. My daughter said that she was applying for a scholarship at a college near our home. I knew that she would not be able to afford to go there if she did not receive the scholarship. So, as it was a Thursday, I wrote up a petition to Jupiter in her favor, mentioning that she needed the scholarship and the name of the school. Then, as it would require some inspiration on the part of the board to give it to her rather than someone else, I burned the paper in the backyard, after I prayed over it. Two weeks later, when the board met, she learned that she had been awarded the scholarship.

That convinced me that this system of petitioning the deities was fundamentally sound. I have been using it in certain cases ever since. The combination of the planetary forces and the elements works very well indeed, although so far as I know it is not any part of the regular hex practice. My grandfather and my

father certainly did not teach it to me. I recommend this work to you, but without giving any guarantees. I hope that you are as successful with it as I have been.

It was easy to see how to apply three of the elements to this system, but the fourth one, Air, still escaped me. But then I made a prayer to Mercury once when I was driving in my automobile and had a flat tire and no spare. I prayed with the wind at the back of my head that my wife would take her car and come to my rescue. Now, I was on a country dirt road, and had seen no traffic at all. My only hope was either that one of the Stolfuss brothers who lived on that road would take it into his head to bring his buggy down the road toward town or that my dear wife would hear my prayer and come and rescue me. It took over an hour, but she eventually came to my rescue. Now whenever I want to work a spell involving or directed to the element Air, I pray it three times with the wind at my back. I always add in my prayer that the prayer be carried to the person who needs to hear it.

CHAPTER 6

THE MAGIC OF NATURAL OBJECTS



Part of the work that hexenmeisters do infrequently is what is usually called magic. In the case of a hexenmeister, this is usually magical work that is connected with praying over sticks, stones, and other natural objects. When doing this work, the hexenmeister is making such things as are usually called charms, or talismans, in other systems of magic. The hexenmeister makes up these things for people when he believes that the person needs them for some purpose.

In hex work, these charms or talismans are always made using various natural objects. Now, these magic charms are not very

often made, as the hexenmeister must believe that there has to be a real purpose behind making these things. An example of this is making a magical cup for someone. They are only made when the hexenmeister believes that the person who is to receive the cup needs to have one. Working magic with natural objects is something that is only done when a specific person actually needs a specific thing to be done. These things are not ever made up just because someone wants some kind of charm or talisman.

I will cite here one or two examples of this kind of magic, as it does form a part of the work of most hexenmeisters. I must also add that I have known several very good hexenmeisters who knew nothing of this work, or who may have known about doing these things but refused to do any of them. Many of these good people apparently believe that the making of charms for a specific purpose is something that is best left in God's hands, so they do not make up these kinds of charms or talismans for anyone.

THE MAGIC WISHBONE SPELL

One day a very interesting African American woman called on me with her husband and their three small children. They were touring in the Pennsylvania Dutch area, and she had seen the sign on my gate. Having a desire to meet a Pennsylvania Dutch hexenmeister, she asked me about the hex work.

She was particularly interested in learning about the wishing cup spell. She identified herself as being a root worker. She told me that in the part of North Carolina she came from, the wishing cup spell was not as common as the magic wishbone spell. We exchanged these spells and parted friends after a good talk.

We still correspond from time to time, sharing our mutual interests. Her husband, who is something of an artist, has become quite proficient in painting hex signs. Lately this very talented man has begun painting his own kind of magical hex sign using African American symbolism. He seems to be doing very well at it.

The magic wishbone spell that she taught me that afternoon is the following. Take a wishbone from a chicken that your family eats. The person for whom you are making the wishbone should also partake of some of the meat of the chicken. If that person does not eat with your family at the meal where the chicken is served, some of the meat can be saved for him or her. Dry out the wishbone after removing all of the meat from it. Now set the wishbone on a small clay dish, like a saucer, which is to become its home. Take some red wool yarn, and wrap it around the right half of the wishbone while praying that the wishbone may be used to bring good things into the life of the person who uses it. Now sprinkle the wishbone with a small amount of mullein leaf that has been ground up to a powder. This powder is also known as wishbone powder. It is what is used to "feed" the wishbone. Then give the wishbone, sitting on its saucer, to the person who is to use it along with the instructions for its use. The instructions are as follows. When you firmly know what it is that you want, you should take the wishbone and, holding it in both hands, tell it exactly what it is that you desire. Then sprinkle a pinch or two of the mullein leaf (or wishbone) powder on it. Now repeat your request to it as it lies on its plate or saucer, and when you have done so, replace the wishbone in the dark place where you keep it. It must be kept out of sight, and you should not ever tell anyone else that you have a magic wishbone.

This is a very similar spell to the wishing cup spell, which I give below. I must admit that my curiosity about this spell got the best of me. I made up one of these magic wishbones for my son when he went away to college. He said that he used it successfully when he had to drive home for Christmas vacation during a very severe snowstorm. He told me that he found himself driving very safely behind snowplows most of the way home. He told me that he had no difficulty at all getting home, although traveling on the snow-covered roads was very difficult at the time.

THE WISHING CUP SPELL

The wishing cup is made up for a particular person, just as the wishbone is. When the wishing cup is being made, the hexenmeister should think constantly of the person for whom he is making it and the uses that he intends it to be put to.

The person for whom the cup is being made should bring a new drinking cup, usually an ordinary coffee cup or teacup, to the hexenmeister. The hexenmeister then washes the cup with soap and water and rinses it well. Then he rinses the cup out three times with cold water. Next, he puts a bit of oil, only a drop or so, on his finger and wipes it inside the cup. Now he holds the cup in both hands and prays over it as follows:

Oh Lord, who has made all things, in the name of Jesus Christ, who said that if one had the faith of a grain of mustard seed they would be able to do great things, I pray that this cup that I hold be blessed and consecrated to the use of _____ (name) _____ so that through thy bountiful grace (s)he should receive all of those things that (s)he may desire which are rightfully his (hers). Amen.

The cup is then given to the person with both hands by the hexenmeister, the person receiving it using both hands to grasp it. The hexenmeister then gives the person the instructions for using the cup, which are usually as follows.

The person using the cup must sit with the cup, some paper and a pencil, and some matches at a table. He or she must write out, as briefly as possible, exactly what it is that is desired. Then the person must read it over several times to be absolutely certain that this is exactly what he or she wants. Now the desire is written out again, on as small a piece of paper as possible. Finally, the person should put the paper into the wishing cup and ignite it with a match, praying to the Lord God as the paper burns that what he or she desires is obtained.

I have found that these wishing cups work quite well for those few people I have made them for. Naturally, in praying over the cup I have limited the success of the cup to those things that the person deserves or has actual need of. I do this in making the prayer over the cup by saying that "he should receive those things that he desires which are rightfully his." I suppose that this is why I do not feel that it is wrong to make these wishing cups for those few people who I believe have actually needed them. I know from talking about these wishing cups to other hexenmasters that the fear that they may be misused is one of the reasons that many hexenmasters do not make them up for people at all.

WORKING WITH STICKS

The practice of working with sticks is even more rare than making up a wishing cup. Now, my grandfather made more of these sticks in the course of his life than either my father or I have ever

made. And my father made many more of them than I have made so far in my life. However, these sticks are rarely made in any event. Few of the other hexenmeisters that I know of have ever made one. Many of them seem to have never even heard of this art. This makes me think that it might be something that Miss Ann taught to my grandfather when he lived at her place. I do not know this for a fact, as hexenmeisters are usually secretive people by nature. They tend not to ever speak about what they consider to be their most powerful magical arts, even when they are speaking with other hexenmeisters.

Now, the process of making a stick begins with determining the need for one. They are made to introduce something into a person's life. Whatever is being introduced into the person's life may not always be permanent. This could be anything, like a change of location, gaining a habit, or breaking a habit. It could be a hobby or some other interest to motivate a person in life. Sometimes you find people who have something that you truly know is needed in their life, and that is when the possibility of their needing a stick to be made for them usually occurs to you.

Once you have decided on the necessity for making a stick and know exactly what kind of stick must be made, you must next find a suitable stick for the purpose. It must be a natural stick and one that has fallen from a tree. It must not ever be cut off or broken off of a tree. The stick should be not more than about a half-inch in diameter, and it should be about six inches or so in length.

Having a number of trees in my backyard and a big oak tree in my front yard, I always begin my search for the proper stick by looking under them. When I look for the stick, I always pray about the person it is to be made for and about the purpose for which I wish to make it. If the stick is really needed, a suitable

stick almost immediately presents itself to me. If a suitable stick does not come, I go to my room and think and pray about the case some more. Many times I have abandoned the idea of making a stick after prayerfully rethinking the situation.

Now, once you have found the stick, you should take it to a private place and tell the stick what you wish to use it for. If you get a feeling that it should not be done, you should cast the stick aside and look for another one. Sometimes you will find another stick that will give you a better feeling for the task. In other cases you will not be able to find a stick. This is a sure sign that you should prayerfully think the idea of making up a stick for the person's condition over again. Now, with all of this in mind, and with a stick you believe you can use at hand, you are ready to make the stick into the instrument that you wish it to become.

First, make a hole at one end of the stick, about a half-inch from the end of the stick. This hole is for a wire or string with which to hang up the stick when you are finished with it. Put the string or wire in, make a loop of it, and tie it off. The loop should give you an inch or so hanging space so that the string may be hung up conveniently in an out-of-the-way place.

Now take a sharp knife and cut the initials of the person or people involved into the stick. These may be cut as small as necessary, and if there are more than two people involved, you can reduce the letters so that only the initial letters of all of the names are shown. Next, paint the letters in colors appropriate to the tasks at hand. You can refer to the guide in chapter 3 on hex signs to select the best colors to use for the purpose that you have in mind for the stick.

When this has all been completed you are ready to pray over the stick. I suggest that you thoughtfully write out the prayer you

wish to use, including everything you can think of about the situation in it. Then revise the prayer and make it into exactly what you want for the person.

Finally, holding the stick with both hands, pray the prayer over it three times. Then take the stick down to your cellar, or to some other out-of-the-way place, and hang it up. I usually drive a brad into a beam in the cellar and hang it there. When you are done with the stick, just put the whole affair out of your mind. In most cases the changes you desire in the person will begin to occur quite soon.

MAKING A WALKING STAFF

A walking staff is a good thing for a country person to have. I made one according to the following directions in my youth, and I have it still. Unfortunately, because I have a clubfoot on my left leg, I do as little long-distance walking as possible. My son, on the other hand, goes for long walks, hikes he calls them, and usually uses the staff that I made for him when he was still a teenager in high school.

Cut a staff about the height of the person it is to be made for out of a hardwood sapling. Choose one that is about two inches around and cut it in the fall of the year. Let it dry outside or in a barn over the winter. When spring comes, hang the staff horizontally from a string or cord tied in the middle so that the ends are free. Let it turn around as it will until it finds its own way. When it is steady after a time, see in which direction the staff is pointing. If it points in about a north-south direction, which an amazing number of these staffs will do, the north-pointing end is to be the top of the staff. If it points in an east-west direction, the east-pointing end is to be the top of the staff. Now, you must not

expect that it will point like a compass, and if you allow for this and let the main directions that it is pointing in rule your choice, you will come pretty close to getting the staff correctly aligned.

Make a mark on the end of the staff that is to be the top, and then take it off of the string or cord. It is a good idea to make a mark at the balance point as well. However, you will have to balance it again in your workshop anyway, so marking it now is not all that important. I use a piece of chalk for making the marks, as a pencil seems not to show up as well.

Now drill a hole in the bottom of the staff at the center and put a washer and a ten-penny nail on it and pound the nail home. This gives the staff an iron tip, but not a pointed one. I use the kind of washers called fender washers. I went to the hardware store with my father to buy some when I was about ten or twelve, and as we have made few staffs between us since that time, many of the dozen washers we bought then are with me yet.

Now, on the opposite end, or top, of the staff, make a hole about the size of a dime, and about three-quarters of an inch deep. Into this hole place a silver dime, a copper penny, and a small piece of lodestone. Now fill this hole with beeswax and some of the shavings that came out when you bored out the hole.

Next, balance the staff on an edge in your workshop so that you know where the point of balance is. Now cut a very small strip of the bark out at this point. A piece about a sixteenth of an inch wide is about right. Fill the gouge with beeswax again. Now let the staff stand, with the top up, in the corner of your workshop until the heat of summer.

At the new moon, take the staff and pray over it for the success, prosperity, and protection of the person using it. The iron on the base is for the protection of the user, the silver and copper in

the top is for prosperity, the lodestone is so that the user never loses his or her way in life. The balance point is so that the person always walks a balanced path, never veering from the course set for him or her by the Creator.

I have only one written prayer for this work, given me by my father. However I find that I always make up my own prayer to use when praying on the staff anyway. In my made-up prayer I always mention the name of the person the staff is to be made for. In fact I usually do this several times in the course of my prayer, or my dedication, of the staff.

Now, I have been told that this is a consecration of the staff, but I do not believe that it is. To my mind, a consecration is the act of making something holy. A staff is a working item, a useful tool. I really do not see how such a thing can be made holy. This is why I call it just a prayer over the staff, or a dedication of the staff for its use by a specific person.

MAKING A MAGIC WAND

Several years ago, a good friend of mine who is interested in magic brought me a piece of peach wood that had blown off one of his peach trees and asked me to make him a peach wood wand. Now, I had not heard of this before, so I asked him about it. He told me that he was reading a book on magic and that the book suggested that he use a peach wood wand for making the circle and calling on the spirits he wished to work with. He told me that the wand should be about fourteen inches long, and about an inch and a half in diameter. Now, all of this was news to me, but I told him that I would try to make one for him. This is how I made it.

I first sawed the wand to length, leaving it a little oversize. It was about an inch and a half in diameter, and about sixteen inches

long. Then I removed the bark and let it dry by hanging it up in my workshop for a week or so. The next step was sanding the wand, making it smooth all around.

My friend had some symbols he wanted carved into the wand. Although the symbols meant nothing at all to me, I carved them in as well as I could, while praying that the wand would be satisfactory for his use. Then I smoothed the wand again with fine sandpaper. This time I shaped the top end of the wand, as one end seemed to me to serve better as a top than as a bottom.

Then I hung the wand up again, wondering what else I should do with it. A few weeks later I decided to paint the symbols with some pokeberry ink that my daughter had asked me to make up for a Civil War buff in one of her classes at school. She took down all of the steps I went through in making it, not many at all, and said that was the information she wanted. This left me with about two ounces of the pokeberry ink. I used a fine paintbrush and painted in the symbols as well as I could. When I was finished, I put the ink away in the refrigerator, as it spoils, and hung the wand up in my workshop again.

Several days later, acting on an impulse, I took the wand down. Holding it in both hands, I prayed that almighty God would let my friend (saying his name) use the wand for any lawful purpose and to the greater glory of God. I then put the wand back and went upstairs where my wife had a store of white tissue wrapping paper for gifts and such. I got several sheets of the paper and brought it downstairs and wrapped up the wand as I thought it should be wrapped.

Then I called my friend and told him that his wand was ready for him. When I gave it to him he was more than pleased with it.

He has told me that it has enabled him to achieve the kinds of things he wanted to achieve in doing his magical ceremonies.

WORKING WITH STONES

Everything in the divine creation has a purpose. Everything in creation contains some kind of spiritual force within itself, because it was all created by the Lord God. This is not a popular view among some people, but if you take the trouble to read the creation story in Genesis, you will find that it is true. Because this is true, and because the Lord God has given humans dominion over all things, as it says in verses three to eight of the eighth psalm, all things in creation can be used to benefit humankind in their life on this Earth. It is for this reason that stones may harmonize themselves with people and actually perform work of various kinds for them.

The importance of these supposedly inanimate stones in our world may be indicated by the large number of times that they are cited in the Bible, both simply as stones and also by the name of the particular stone that is meant. My own concordance lists sixty-five citations of the word *stone*, showing that they are indeed important in the scheme of the divine creation. The concordance has citations of the word *stone* in books from Genesis to Revelations. Many of these citations also reveal to the enlightened eye the manner in which these various stones are to be used by humankind for their benefit.

Now, I am speaking of ordinary stones, not rubies, diamonds, and other precious stones. These precious and semiprecious stones undoubtedly have a place in the creation as well, but I have never been able to afford such things. The so-called common

stones of the field may find a particularly interesting place in the work of a hexenmeister.

Some stones may be used to remove pain, others may assist you in doing other various things. I believe that it was the common sort of stones that the ancient magicians referred to when they said that some stones had special properties. However, I have found that these properties are unique to the individual stones, and not all of the stones are of the same kind.

A stone may contain the mighty spirit of a place, as it did at Beth El when Jacob chose a stone to use as his pillow (Gen. 28:11-22). It may be a witness to an oath, as the covenant made between Jacob and Laban was witnessed (Gen. 31:44-55). It may be an instrument of destruction, as was one of the five brook stones chosen by David, which he used to kill the giant Goliath (1 Sam. 17:40). A stone also serves as a symbol for Christ in the New Testament (Matt. 21:42, Mark 12:10, Luke 20:17).

My father had a collection of some of these stones, and so did my grandfather. They believed, as do I, that the stones work only for the person who hears their call. Thus, the stones that they had worked with were placed on their grave when they died. The stones that I have worked with in my life will also be placed on my grave when I die. I have arranged for this with both my wife and my son.

Now, the first question that might be asked is just how a person senses the calls of these stones. My honest answer is that it is a matter of being aware of things. If you are sufficiently aware, when a stone calls out to you, you are able to sense it, or hear it, and locate the stone. At any time in your life, you will have certain needs; these needs are what the stone that is able to assist you will recognize. Then, through your having a need, consciously or

unconsciously, the stone that will satisfy that need will draw itself to you, attracting your conscious attention in some way. All you must do then is to pick it up and keep it with you.

Once you have the stone in the palm of your hand, you may ask it with your mental thought just what it is that it may do for you. Amazing to some people, but not to one who has real knowledge of these things, the idea of the service that the stone will be able to perform for you will then appear in your mind. All you must do then is to allow the stone to perform that service for you.

I have heard that in some magical practices it is customary to wash the stone in cold water immediately after finding it. Then the person who is to use the stone prays over it, asking God's blessing on it for the service it has volunteered to perform. I have always asked God's blessing on the stone and on its spirit. In this way, I express my gratitude to it for any work it has done for me. I have also washed stones in water from time to time if it felt necessary for me to do so. However, I do not always wash the stones when I first find them.

When I was yet in high school my father explained this work with stones to me. The following Saturday I went to a gem and rock show that was being held in the shopping mall just outside of our town. There I saw a pretty stone that drew my eye. I picked it up and asked it what it could do for me. It told me that it could remove pain from people. So I paid fifty cents for it, and took it home with me. I showed it to my father, and that night we made a small wooden box to keep it in.

I still follow the same practice. Now I have at least a half dozen small wooden boxes with stones in them, each stone separately resting on its own small cotton batting cushion in its own labeled box.

I would advise you to follow a similar practice, so far as being aware of any stones that may wish to attract your attention. If a stone calls to you, it will do so because it wishes to gain merit in the eyes of the Lord God by working with you in some way. You may keep each stone in its own box, but small cardboard gift boxes seem to be as good a home for them as the wooden boxes that my father taught me to make.

Do not concern yourself about speaking to the stones; if they wish to work with you, you will be able to communicate with them. Just treat them with respect and thank God that you have them. The stones will assist you in your work as they have assisted me in mine.

Just as a person gains merit with his Lord by being of assistance to other people, so does the spirit of the stone gain merit and grace with its Creator by assisting humankind to attain whatever it desires. When working with stones in this manner, all is accomplished under the grace of God, and with the blessings of Jesus Christ. Therefore, you should never hesitate to ask a stone for its assistance in matters that it may be able to help you with.

WITNESS STONES

A stone may be set up as a witness to a solemn pledge or oath, although this is a very rare thing. The procedure I give here comes from the Bible, so it is reliable; however, I have only seen this accomplished once in my life, and that by my father.

The stone is first to be anointed with oil (Gen. 31:44-55), and then the pledge, oath, or covenant is to be made before it. As a witness, it shall surely cry out of the wall (Hab. 2:11) if the pledge or covenant that it has witnessed is ever transgressed or voided. No one should ever even consider breaking a pledge made in this

way, as the whole Earth would rise up against him as an oath breaker. This is probably why this work is so infrequently done.

CHARM STONES

When my daughter was about eight years old she found a stone with a hole in it and brought it over to show to me. Naturally I questioned the stone, and when it told me that it would protect my daughter I prayed over it, thanking God for it as a gift to my daughter. Then I put it on a string for her to wear around her neck. She has that stone to this day, although she now wears it on a leather thong along with some beads.

Once, a man come to me with a serious problem involving his finances. He asked me if there was anything I could do it help him with his problem. On praying about it I saw a green stone in my mind. I told him that he should find that green stone and bring it to me.

He found the stone in his garden during the following week and brought it to me. I prayed over it and gave it back to him, giving him the information that I had received about the stone. About a month later he called me and told me that his financial difficulties were straightening out almost miraculously. He credited my work, but I credited the stone the Lord God had shown to me when I prayed for the man.

Such things come up from time to time, but they do so very rarely. Whenever I have the feeling that I should work with a stone for someone, I do so. Whenever I believe, after prayer, that I should prepare a charm stone for someone, I do so as well. As I say, this rarely happens, but such work does come along from time to time. Everything on this Earth has been put here for the

benefit of humankind by the Lord God, and it is but for us to make use of these things.

The Earth and all that is on it is our sacred trust from our Creator, and we must honor it as such.

CHAPTER 7

SUPERSTITION OR PRACTICAL REALITY?



THE HEX PRACTICE, AND OTHER NONPHYSICAL PRACTICES

There are a number of the hex work's more unusual practices that I have not explained here, such as the dumb supper, the making and use of a spirit lamp, and several other interesting things. These other practices of the hexenmeister are far more rarely done and often more complicated. I believe that in this book there are enough of the common hex practices explained to give the reader a very good idea of just how hex work is actually accomplished. I also believe that if the sincere reader wishes to use any of the hex

practices to benefit either himself or his friends, this book will provide a good start at doing so. As I have mentioned, it is the Lord God who does the work; the hexenmeister is only the passive instrument of his will.

As I said in the first chapter, I believe that it is important for a beginning hexenmeister to learn from one who is successful in their hex practice. However, with so few hexenmeisters working anymore, there is no chance at all of learning the work unless you are fortunate enough to be born into the right family. No hexenmeister that I know of will train anyone who is not of his own immediate family, and that includes myself. Thus it is becoming increasingly more difficult for anyone to begin to learn the hex practice. However, I am certain that this work will not die out completely, as it is something that has proven itself over time to be too useful in the world.

It is fashionable today to call all of the kinds of things we have been talking about—hex work, folk remedies or country cures, and all of the nonrational and nonphysical arts—a great mass of superstition. However, every culture in every society develops a variety of folk remedies and healing rituals to suit its needs. I suppose that they would all be called superstitious nonsense by those who believe in the superiority of the rational mind and the scientific establishment.

However I must caution those who wish to take a strictly objective view of the development and propagation of these rituals and beliefs that these beliefs always seem to originate from the observation and experience of a rural people, those who depend on nature for their sustenance and survival. I need not further mention that rural people have a very close connection with nature, something that is revealed in their attitude toward life.

Thus I ask that you keep an open mind about these practices, as there actually may be something in these rural beliefs, even though they do not fit neatly into the framework of the official scientific establishment.

To some people, farmers and people who live in extremely rural areas have a very poor reputation. They are called country bumpkins or other more derogatory epithets. Others, especially some unhappy city dwellers, idolize these same folk as being people who live a more "natural" life. The truth of the matter is that those who live on farms often have a better understanding of life, nature, and the responsibility of work than those who are raised in the larger cities of the country today. This comes about because the rural people must literally earn their keep at home from a very early age. There is always more work needing to be done on a farm than can be done by those who live on it.

Having seen firsthand the differences between those children raised in our "superstitious" Pennsylvania Dutch society and those raised in the larger towns and cities, I can well believe that a rural upbringing is far more beneficial for a child than an urban one. Now, what does all of this have to do with the subject of this book? First, I believe that there is a great need for people to have a strong set of cultural guidelines when they grow up. I also believe that it is necessary for all young people to have a good strong religious foundation. Were this not so, religion and an abiding faith in the Creator would not be such a fundamental part of every known human society.

The Pennsylvania Dutch people always provide both a strong cultural base and a good solid religious foundation to their children. Most other societies in our nation today do not stress the details of their particular culture or promote any particular reli-

gious practice in their children's upbringing. I also believe that training in a strong work ethic should be a part of a child's upbringing. This is again found among the Pennsylvania Dutch and among few other societies found in our nation today.

If it takes superstition to give these advantages to a child, so be it. This just tells me that superstition has its benefits as well as its disadvantages. Personally, I believe that many of the so-called superstitions of the Pennsylvania Dutch are simply the result of their close and extended observations of the way in which the world actually works. I think that at least some of these supposed superstitions actually convey a deeper observation of the world than our modern sciences have yet discovered. But science marches on; perhaps in the future our scientists will discover the truth of many of these interesting things that we consider to be superstitions today.

WORKING BY THE MOON SIGN

One example of so-called superstition knowing more than science is working by the signs of the Moon. I know of no scientific basis for it, but the farmers of the Pennsylvania Dutch country never seem to be faced with the disastrous loss of crops that most other farmers around the nation occasionally encounter. I believe that this is due, at least to some extent, to most of the Dutch country farmers planting their crops by the Moon. Most of them follow a schedule similar to the one below. You may try this for yourself in your own home garden if you wish.

The table on pages 130-31 shows a sample of these old country beliefs that seem to work out well when they are put into practice.

In addition to watching the sign of the zodiac in which the Moon is located, the phase of the Moon is often considered as well. New activities or new beginnings are conducted under a new moon, while those that have been started are finished off at the full moon. This also is said to have some effect on planting. There are also some rules for planting root crops and grains, based on whether the Moon is new or old. Underground crops and fruit should be picked in the week before the new moon to reduce bruising and damage.

Another example of using the phase of the Moon is that women who wish to have the long flowing tresses associated with many of the country women have their hair cut when the new moon is in a water sign (Pisces, Cancer, or Scorpio). There are occasionally haircutting parties in some homes, when the women of the house and her friends take advantage of this placement of the new moon to trim each other's hair. I have found that this actually seems to work as the stories say. As I wished to reduce the number of haircuts I have to have, I have been going to the barber with the Moon in an unfruitful fire sign (Aries, Leo, or Sagittarius). This seems to work for me as well.

Barn raisings, which do not happen very much anymore, were often done at the new moon. The posts for the barn, or the foundation, were usually set with the full moon in Capricorn. This is supposed to provide a longer-lasting foundation and a stronger barn. As some of the barns of the plain people are well over a hundred years old, I would say that the old-time barn builders knew what they were doing.

<i>The Sign of the Moon</i>	<i>Farm Activities Done or Prohibited</i>
Aries (Ram)	Best chicks for setting are hatched. Plant new potatoes for a better harvest. Plant onions. Weed and cultivate all crops.
Taurus (Bull)	Breed cows and horses. Plant carrots and root crops.
Gemini (Twins)	Plant no field crops. Weed and cultivate for abundant yields.
Cancer (Crab)	Plant pumpkin, squash, and garden crops. Irrigate and transplant crops.
Leo (Lion)	Draw off apple cider to make vinegar. Plant corn in this sign for larger ears. Weed and cultivate planted crops.
Virgo (Virgin)	Set hens on an odd number of eggs so that more chicks hatch. Good for planting grain, cultivating crops.
Libra (Scales)	Plant tomatoes for market, as it encourages a larger fruit.
Scorpio (Scorpion)	Do not castrate an animal, as it keeps the cut from healing well. Plant, irrigate, and cultivate.
Sagittarius (Archer)	Do not plant onions, as they will turn to seed before being harvested. Weed crops and cultivate.

Capricorn (Goat)	Barter and trade with the neighbors. Take your farm produce to market. Plant any root crops.
Aquarius (Waterman)	Weed fields and break new ground with the plow. Cultivate fields. Spray for pests, weed.
Pisces (Fishes)	Plant cucumbers. Do not make pickles or sauerkraut. Plant crops and cultivate.

SUPERSTITION, FAITH, AND BELIEF

I do not think that we can consider superstition apart from faith. We all have at least some faith. When we take our clothes to the dry cleaner for cleaning we have faith that the proprietor will clean them and return them to us. That is proof of at least a minimal faith. The Bible says that if we should have as much faith as a grain of mustard seed nothing shall be impossible to us.

If we have faith in a superstition, and honestly believe it to be true, it seems that it will become true for us. Those who do not believe in that superstition, cannot accept it. They have no faith in it, and it is probably not true at all for them. I am not certain just how this process of the mind works, but I do believe that it does work in this way. We are what we believe, and what we have faith in.

The human mind is a wonderful thing. As the Red Queen said in *Alice in Wonderland*, "I find it quite easy to believe three impossible things before breakfast." I think that almost all people find it quite easy to believe at least three or more impossible things, most of them believing these impossible things any time that they desire to do so. I know that I have met people who

believed things that I personally consider to be completely outrageous. At an early age I was dissuaded by my father from arguing with any of these firm-minded people. He correctly pointed out to me that I had no hope at all of changing their minds. He further told me that I should not waste my time and breath in having a fruitless argument, or even a futile discussion, with them.

Experience of life on the Earth only comes with age. If youth is wasted on the young, experience has been wasted on at least some of the aged. For some of us, the real presence of the Lord God in our lives is a living and vibrant thing. I know that for other people there is no experience of God and no belief in either a Creator or a Savior. I have no idea how a man can live without faith in God, but I suppose that the Lord God in his wisdom has given them something that supplants the strong and living faith that others have to lean on.

I have heard it said that the decline of religion is into superstition. This may be so, but I have found many more religious people among the superstitious than among the nonsuperstitious. I also have observed that believers of all faiths are more at peace within themselves than those who claim to have no religion at all. I think that having this calmness and serenity in your approach to life is a good thing.

MY IDEA OF REALITY

In my own case, I believe that there are worlds visible and invisible, all of which are the creation of the one God, the Creator, who exists in three persons as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. I believe that this Creator God manifested the entire creation, physical and nonphysical alike, by calling it into being with a mighty word. I believe that he gave Adam and Eve a place in a paradise called

Eden and that this place was lost to them through their own grievous fault of disobedience to his command. I believe that the Lord appointed Abraham to found a mighty nation and that Moses led the children of Israel across the Red Sea on dry ground. I believe that the Lord God sent Jesus Christ to save all of humankind and that this work of salvation was completed by Christ's crucifixion and death on the cross at Calvary.

I have seen and spoken to spirits, both human and nonhuman. I have fought against the works of those who have turned to Satan in their life, instead of accepting the salvation offered by Jesus Christ. I know that the nonphysical worlds exist as certainly as I know that I have a Bible on my bedside table from which I read a psalm at bedtime every night. I also know that I cannot hope to convince those who can neither accept nor see these things. I have not attempted to convince anyone to accept any of my own beliefs since I was in grade school. I feel that attempting to sway others to my beliefs would be a denial of my own faith.

The world that I live in is as populated with the spirits of the dead as it is populated with the living. I have kept them from my home and hearth as I have described to you previously. I do see them on the street and in the homes that I visit in the course of my work. In most cases I see these spirits as clearly as I would see a living person. I do not ever idly converse with any of these spirits. I speak with them only when there is a pressing need for me to do so.

This then is the reality in which I live. I do not ask you to share it with me, but I do ask that you be as tolerant of what my beliefs are as I attempt to be tolerant of your own beliefs. In that way we may all work together to increase the harmony in the world.

AFTERWORD



There is no end to life until the day of God's judgment. But all of the works of humanity must end in the fullness of time. It is for this reason that I place here a few final thoughts and ask that you consider them. If I am not too presumptuous, I ask that you spend some time pondering them in your heart, as Mary was said to have pondered upon the message given her by the angel Gabriel.

If you believe that you have the ability to practice magic or to do healing or to otherwise aid your fellow humans in their journey through life, I believe that this ability is with you because the Lord God has given you these talents as a blessing for you.

Having any of these abilities is a blessing, both to you, and to others. Thus it is your duty to make use of these talents to the extent to which you are able to do so. You should do this work sincerely and always perform it in aid of others. May the Lord who gave you these abilities grant that you find someone to instruct you further in their best and proper use.

If you find that you do not have these talents or abilities, please do not disparage them in others who may have been given them. Many children are born with rare and wonderful gifts, only to lose them because the parents either disparage their child or discourage them from developing their unusual abilities. This is unfortunately a great loss to the whole world. Particularly, it is a loss to humankind, as these gifts may often not be replaced.

Before you disparage the gifts of the Lord God in children, consider what would have happened if Mary and Joseph had not been as accepting of their very unusual child as they so obviously were. Suppose that they had discouraged the wonderful gifts that they found in the infant Jesus. Your child or a neighbor's child may be gifted by God beyond your own comprehension. Please do not discourage or disparage any of these wonderful children in their attempts to grow and to understand the world around them through using their precious gifts.

*And may the grace of the Lord God be with you,
And with your spirit,
Now and throughout your whole life.
Amen.*

Karl Herr, Hexenmeister

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER READING



ESSENTIAL BOOKS FOR THE HEX PRACTICE

The following books, in addition to the Bible, are generally considered to be basic to the Pennsylvania Dutch hex practice. Inexpensive paperback reprints of these books are available at many so-called spiritual and occult bookstores. These books will usually be found in the library of every hexenmeister who has managed to chase down a copy.

Michael R. Best and Frank H. Brightman, eds., *The Book of Secrets of Albertus Magnus: Of the virtues of Herbs, Stones, and Certain Beasts, Also a book of the Marvels of the World*, York Beach, ME, Red Wheel/Weiser, 2000. This is the best

edition of this work; it is a modern scholarly edition with an editorial comment on the literature of the time. It was almost certainly not written by Albertus Magnus, but it may have been written by one of his students. It is an interesting compilation of the beliefs of the time. The modern introduction by the editors sets the tone of the times and places this work into the context of the time in which it was written. This book is also available in a number of inexpensive editions of quite variable quality.

John G. Hohman, *Pow-Wows, or the Long Lost Friend*, Pomeroy, WA, Health Research Books, 1996. First published in 1820 at Reading Pennsylvania by the author, this is usually considered to be the fundamental book of the hex worker. It is available inexpensively at most occult and spiritual supply stores. The German name of this book is: *Der Lang Verborgene Freund*.

Albertus Magnus, *Egyptian Secrets, or White and Black Art for Man and Beast*, Kila, MT, Kessinger Publishing, 1998. This book is available in many occult stores. See the note below on books of German origin. This is certainly one of them. Egyptian Publishing Co., ed., *The Sixth and Seventh Book of Moses*, Kila, MT, Kessinger Publishing, 1996. First published in the United States by an unknown publisher in 1880. See the complete note concerning this book below.

A NOTE ABOUT THE SIXTH AND SEVENTH BOOKS OF MOSES.

A relatively new edition of this old work was published within the past few years. It has not been widely accepted by many people as yet, as most people I know prefer the older version of the book. However, it is an interesting revision, with few major changes

made to the original text. There is some doubt in my own mind as to whether it is an improvement on the original book. This new revision is *The New Revised Sixth and Seventh Books of Moses and the Magical Use of the Psalms*, as edited by Migene Gonzalez Wippler. It was published in 1982 by Original Publications. Ms. Wippler is a well-known writer on the African American Santeria Magico religious practice.

The Sixth and Seventh Books of Moses was originally written in German, and published in 1849 as a manuscript edited by Johann Scheibel. The German title was *Das Sechste und Siebnte Buch Mosis*. The text of this book was translated into English and published in the United States in 1880. The bulk of the original German text was taken from J. C. Horst's book *Zauberuibibliothek*. This is a German occult classic that was published in Mainz, Germany, between 1821 and 1826. This work appeared in six volumes. J. C. Horst himself probably compiled the work that later became known as *The Sixth and Seventh Books of Moses*. Despite the claim that material in this book is taken from the Jewish Talmud, none of it actually originates there. The origin of much of the material in *The Sixth and Seventh Books of Moses* has been traced to the writings of Cornelius Heinrich Agrippa, the Grimoire of Honorius, the Grand Grimoire, and several other well-known occult sources, even including Goethe's poem *Faust*. Much of the material in the book was taken from Germanic folklore. It was placed into the context of pseudo-Jewish writings to obtain the necessary cachet of authenticity. The Jews were considered to be great magicians by most German peasants of the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries.

A NOTE ABOUT SOME OCCULT BOOKS OF GERMAN ORIGIN

The process of taking obscure occult books written in Germany in the late 1600s and early 1700s and changing their contents around to make other books is one of the more interesting puzzles of magical literature. For example, the current American and British editions of the famous work of ceremonial magic known as *The Book of the Sacred Magic of Abra-Melin* were translated and edited by S. L. MacGregor-Mathers from a French manuscript. The German text from which the French version was taken was originally quite similar to that of the *Sixth and Seventh Books of Moses*. I have my doubts that the latter work was ever very much different in style or content from the former in its original German language incarnation. I have not seen a copy of the German text, a copy of which is in the British Museum, but a good friend of mine has, and he reports that the latter part of the book is very much like the text of *The Sixth and Seventh Books of Moses*. I shall take his word for it.

It would seem that in the middle to late-seventeenth century there was a great market in Germany for this kind of practical occult and folklore book. Having a ready market, a large number of books were written to fill this need. In my opinion, none of them are really very worthwhile. It is interesting to me to notice that most of these books credit the Jewish people with having all kinds of magical powers. However, despite being accredited to Jewish authors, all of these books display a gross lack of knowledge of the Jewish religion. These books undoubtedly all were written by Christian, rather than Jewish, authors.

One of more interesting of these occult compilations is Johann Schaibel's twelve-volume work *Das Kloster*, which was published in Stuttgart between 1845 and 1849. This was an extensive

compilation of all kinds of odd documents, magicians' notes, miscellaneous extracts from obscure demonologies, and so forth. Some extracts of this confusing mass of material are also included in *The Sixth and Seventh Books of Moses*.

I would like to thank Brian Cole for his assistance in tracing some of the origins and modifications of these obscure German occult books. The previous paragraphs are the result of his studies. His frequent correspondence with me concerning the German origin of the hex practice has been most interesting indeed.

ADDITIONAL BOOKS IN THE LIBRARIES OF HEXENMEISTERS

Henri Gamache, *The Master Book of Candle Burning*, Bronx, NY, Original Publications, 1998. Originally published in 1942, this book deals with the magical art of candle burning, which is not a hex work practice at all.

———, *The Mystery of the Long Lost 8th, 9th, and 10th Books of Moses*, Bronx, NY, Original Publications, 1986. This is an edition of the work that was published for the occult store trade for many years by the Marvel Book Co.

Lee R. Gandee, *Strange Experience, the Autobiography of a Hexenmeister*, Upper Saddle River, NJ, Prentice-Hall, 1971. The book's subtitle describes it all. Currently out of print, anyone wishing to either study or to practice hex work should try to obtain this wonderful and sympathetic book.

Hans Sebald, *Witchcraft: The Heritage of a Heresy*, New York, Elsevier, 1978. This is another book that traces the roots of some of the hex beliefs. It is an anthropological study of witchcraft in Franconia Swiss Germany, with a small amount of similar information from the German Palatinate.

This work reveals a great deal about the cultural and mental background of the German immigrants to Pennsylvania who work to this day in the hex practice.

OTHER BOOKS

Donald Atkinson, *The Penguin Dictionary of the Saints*, New York, Penguin Books, 1965.

Alban Butler, *Butler's Lives of the Saints*. Ed. Michael Walsh. HarperSanFrancisco, 1991.

Nigel Pennick, *Magical Alphabets*, York Beach, ME, Samuel Weiser, 1992.

Mr. Mikhail Strabo wrote a great deal about the use of candles in prayer in the 1940s. This field of magic is called candle magic. As I have mentioned above, it is not a part of hex work at all. The book, along with others mentioned here, also deals with this very interesting art. Mr. Strabo's books are out of print, but some still quite popular with people are listed below.

Mikhail Strabo, *A Candle to Light Your Way*, New York, Guidance House, 1941. This book contains some interesting information on candle magic, including information concerning burning candles while working in the Christian religious practice. There are many other books that deal with pagan or witchcraft candle burning

———, *How to Conduct a Candle Light Service*, New York, Guidance House, 1943. This book is often used as a guide in conducting family group prayer services held in the home of someone who is ill or who has had a great misfortune.

———, *The Guiding Light to Power and Success*, New York, Guidance House, 1942. This book contains more information

on the use of candle magic and prayer in making a success of life.

———, *The Magic Formula for Personal Power*, New York, Guidance House, 1944. This book contains information concerning self-development, with a stress on developing the individual's character. I would recommend this book to anyone who wishes to develop a better character.

———, *The Magic Formula for Successful Prayer*, New York, Guidance House, 1943. This book contains instructions for prayer, including praying for specific remedies for various conditions in a person's life. This is another book that I found to be quite interesting, although it is not strictly speaking hex work.

Eldred Thorsson, *Futhark, a Handbook of Rune Magic*, York Beach, ME, Samuel Weiser, 1984.

Jacob Zook, *Hexology*, Paradise, PA, Zook, no date. There are many designs for hex signs shown in this book. It has a great deal of information on hex signs, and there are also numerous colored illustrations of a wide variety of hex signs, all of which may be purchased from the Zook family business. Contact Jacob Zook, at P.O. Box 104, Paradise, PA 17562.

BOOKS ABOUT THE PENNSYLVANIA DUTCH

A. Monroe Aurand Jr., *Popular Home Remedies and Superstitions of the Pennsylvania Germans*, Lancaster, PA, Aurand Press, no date.

———, *The "Pow-Wow" Book: A Treatise on the Art of "Healing by Prayer" and "Laying on of Hands,"* Lancaster, PA, Aurand Press, no date.

Arthur Lewis, *Hex*, New York, Trident Press, 1969. This is the book mentioned in the infamous "hex murder" case. It was a best seller for a time. It does contain a great deal of information concerning the Pennsylvania Dutch hex practice, including material about its commercialization for the tourist trade in the last half of the twentieth century.

HEX AND SPELLWORK

THE MAGICAL PRACTICES OF THE PENNSYLVANIA DUTCH

Karl Herr, *Hexenmeister*

Herein is the story of a Pennsylvania Dutch Hexenmeister, carrying on the traditions of generations—using time-honored spells, charms, symbols, and potions. In Pennsylvania Dutch country live a large number of people whose ways haven't changed much since their ancestors emigrated from Germany, bringing with them charms and spells for good crops, long life, prosperity, and health.

In *Hex and Spellwork*, Karl Herr presents an engaging history of *spielwerk* and describes its current practice. Learn the difference between hex work and witchcraft, how knowledge is passed down, and where to look for basic remedies for physical, emotional, and spiritual maladies.

Plus practical advice on how to use:

- Verbal charms for everything from broken bones to bruised hearts
- *Himmelbriefs*, letters to God or others in heaven asking for assistance down here on earth
- Folk remedies as simple as ordinary garden onions to stimulate hair growth
- Good luck symbols to bring peace, protection, prosperity, love into your life

Karl Herr is a third generation Hexenmeister who lives and works in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania.

ISBN 1-57863-182-3

US \$16.95



9 781578 631827



8 24297 63182 8

WEISER BOOKS

An Imprint of Red Wheel/Weiser
Boston, MA/York Beach, ME

Cover Design by Dutton & Sherman